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5 PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,  
6 joint with the  
7 COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM  
8 and the  
9 COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
10 U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
11 WASHINGTON, D.C.

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15 DEPOSITION OF: WILLIAM B. TAYLOR

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20 Tuesday, October 22, 2019

21 Washington, D.C.

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24 The deposition in the above matter was held in Room  
25 HVC-304, Capitol Visitor Center, commencing at 9:50 a.m.

1                   Present: Representatives Schiff, Himes, Sewell, Carson,  
2                   Speier, Quigley, Swalwell, Castro, Heck, Welch, Maloney,  
3                   Demings, Krishnamoorthi, Nunes, Conaway, Wenstrup, Stewart,  
4                   Stefanik, Hurd, and Ratcliffe.

5                   Also Present: Representatives Clay, Cooper, DeSaulnier,  
6                   Gomez, Hice, Kelly, Khanna, Krishnamoorthi, Lawrence, Lynch,  
7                   Maloney, Plaskett, Raskin, Rouda, Sarbanes, Tlaib, Wasserman  
8                   Schultz, Bass, Bera, Cicilline, Deutch, Espaillat, Keating,  
9                   Levin, Lieu, Malinowski, Meeks, Omar, Phillips, Titus, Trone,  
10                  Jordan, Armstrong, Cloud, Gibbs, Grothman, Higgins, Keller,  
11                  Meadows, Miller, Norman, Roy, McCaul, Buck, Burchett, Curtis,  
12                  Fitzpatrick, Guest, Mast, Perry, Rooney, Wagner, Watkins, and  
13                  Zeldin.

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1      Appearances:

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4      For the PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE:

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4 For the COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM:

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6 SUSANNE SACHSMAN GROOMS, CHIEF COUNSEL

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12 For the COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

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19 For WILLIAM B. TAYLOR:

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21 JEFFREY H. SMITH

22 JOHN B. BELLINGER III

23 ARNOLD &amp; PORTER

24 601 Massachusetts Avenue, NW

25 Washington, D.C. 20001-3743

1                   THE CHAIRMAN: All right. Let's come to order.

2                   Good morning, Ambassador Taylor. And welcome to the  
3                   House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, which along  
4                   with the Foreign Affairs and Oversight Committees is  
5                   conducting this investigation as part of the official  
6                   impeachment inquiry of the House of Representatives. Today's  
7                   deposition is being conducted as part of the impeachment  
8                   inquiry.

9                   In light of attempts by the State Department and the  
10                  administration to direct witnesses not to cooperate with the  
11                  inquiry, including efforts to limit witness testimony, the  
12                  committee had no choice but to compel your appearance today.  
13                  We thank you for complying with the duly authorized  
14                  congressional subpoena.

15                  Ambassador Taylor has served our country as a  
16                  distinguished diplomat and Ambassador. Prior to returning to  
17                  Embassy Kyiv as Charge d'affaires in June 2019, Ambassador  
18                  Taylor served as executive vice president of the U.S.  
19                  Institute for Peace.

20                  From 2006 to 2009, he served as U.S. Ambassador to  
21                  Ukraine and also held important positions across the State  
22                  Department coordinating U.S. assistance efforts, including to  
23                  Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. He is also a  
24                  West Point grad, I believe, and a Vietnam veteran. And we're  
25                  very grateful for your lifetime of service.

1                   Ambassador Taylor, we will ask you to introduce yourself  
2 and your career experience more fully at the outset of  
3 today's interview for the benefit of the record and all those  
4 present.

5                   Finally, to restate what I and others have emphasized in  
6 other interviews, Congress will not tolerate any reprisal,  
7 threat of reprisal, or attempt to retaliate against any U.S.  
8 Government official for testifying before Congress, including  
9 you or any of your colleagues.

10                  It is disturbing that the State Department in  
11 coordination with the White House has sought to prohibit  
12 Department employees from cooperating with the inquiry and  
13 have tried to limit what they can say. This is unacceptable.  
14 Thankfully, consummate professionals have demonstrated  
15 remarkable courage in coming forward to testify and tell the  
16 truth.

17                  Before I turn to committee counsel to begin the  
18 interview, I invite Ranking Member Nunes to make any opening  
19 remarks.

20                  MR. NUNES: I thank the gentleman.

21                  Once again, we're here for what you're calling an  
22 impeachment inquiry, but there are no rules governing an  
23 impeachment inquiry. There's been no organization of this  
24 impeachment inquiry, and so we're essentially operating under  
25 a lawless situation.

1           We sent a letter last week to the majority requesting a  
2        number of things, but that is to be notified with documents  
3        to at least all three committees under the structure. Only  
4        two of the three committees continue to get the documents for  
5        some odd reason that's not explainable.

6           But in addition to that, now typical customs of this  
7        committee in review of the transcripts are now being put  
8        under lock so that no one has access to the transcripts. And  
9        I want to make a request to the court reporters to ensure  
10      that no tapes disappear being that we have no access to these  
11      transcripts.

12       And, with that, I'll yield to Mr. Jordan.

13       MR. JORDAN: I thank the gentleman for yielding.

14       I would just too echo the notice that we got yesterday  
15      that the minority will not be given access to the transcript,  
16      and even members of this committee or these three committees  
17      can only view the transcript in the presence of someone from  
18      the majority. I don't know that I've seen that happen  
19      before. And just when I thought this process couldn't get  
20      any more unfair, we find out how the transcripts are going to  
21      be treated.

22       Ambassador, I want to thank you for being here. I also  
23      want to thank you for your service to our country.

24       On September 24th, Speaker Pelosi unilaterally announced  
25      that the House was beginning a so-called impeachment inquiry.

1       On October 2nd, Speaker Pelosi promised that the so-called  
2       impeachment inquiry would, quote, treat the President with  
3       fairness. However, Speaker Pelosi, Chairman Schiff, and the  
4       Democrats are not living up to that basic promise. Instead,  
5       Democrats are conducting a rushed, closed-door, and  
6       unprecedented impeachment inquiry.

7           Democrats are ignoring 45 years of bipartisan procedures  
8       designed to provide elements of fundamental fairness and due  
9       process in past impeachment inquiries: The majority and  
10       minority had coequal subpoena authority, the right to require  
11       a committee vote on all subpoenas. The President's counsel  
12       had a right to attend all depositions and hearings, including  
13       those held in executive sessions. The President's counsel  
14       had the right to cross-examine witnesses and the right to  
15       propose witnesses. The President's counsel had the right to  
16       present evidence, object to the admission of evidence, and to  
17       review all evidence presented, both favorable and  
18       unfavorable.

19           Speaker Pelosi and Chairman Schiff's so-called  
20       impeachment inquiry has none of these guarantees of  
21       fundamental fairness and due process. Most disappointing,  
22       Democrats are conducting this so-called impeachment inquiry  
23       behind closed doors, and as the ranking member of the  
24       Intelligence Committee just suggested, with no access given  
25       to the -- no transcripts given to the minority party.

1           This seems to be nothing more than hiding this work from  
2 the American people. If Democrats intend to undo the will of  
3 the American people just a year before the next election,  
4 they should at least do so transparently and be willing to be  
5 accountable for their actions.

6           With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

7           THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. McCaul.

8           I would only say, because I don't want to get into  
9 extended debate, and we can discuss this without taking up  
10 the witness' time, that members of three committees have  
11 access to the transcripts when the transcripts are completed  
12 and they have had a chance to be finalized.

13           The one transcript that the minority was able to  
14 download and print was leaked to the press promptly. That's  
15 a problem, and that is part of the reason we have to maintain  
16 the security of the transcripts.

17           Finally, unlike the past impeachments where there was a  
18 special counsel doing these proceedings before the grand  
19 jury, there is no special counsel here because the Department  
20 of Justice declined to even investigate the matter so we have  
21 to do that work ourselves.

22           I'll now turn to committee counsel.

23           MR. NUNES: Mr. McCaul had an opening statement.

24           MR. McCaul: I'll just be very brief.

25           To your point, the Foreign Affairs Committee has

1 jurisdiction over the majority of these witnesses. We have a  
2 SCIF at the Foreign Affairs Committee that can handle  
3 classified information and electronically as well. And I  
4 would ask that you reconsider this new rule that you've  
5 issued to allow us to have those documents in the Foreign  
6 Affairs SCIF and to make it more accessible.

7 I agree with my colleagues, there's no House rule or  
8 resolution authorizing this. I talked to Ken Starr last  
9 weekend. There's a way to do this right, and I think we  
10 should do it the same way we did the Clinton and Nixon  
11 administration. I think, in your words, you'll say that --

12 [Disruption in hearing room.]

13 MR. MCCAUL: The committee is not in order -- you will  
14 say that there's no special counsel. So I guess my question  
15 is, are you the special counsel, slash, prosecutor and the  
16 grand jury of this inquiry?

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Are you finished with your opening  
18 remarks?

19 MR. MCCAUL: Yes.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Then let's proceed.

21 Mr. Goldman.

22 MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a  
23 deposition of a --

24 THE CHAIRMAN: No further remarks will be entertained at  
25 this time. Mr. Goldman.

1                   MR. GOLDMAN: This is a deposition of Ambassador William  
2                   B. Taylor, Jr., conducted by the House Permanent Select  
3                   Committee on Intelligence pursuant to the impeachment inquiry  
4                   announced by the Speaker of the House on September 24th.

5                   Ambassador Taylor --

6                   MR. ROY: There are members of this committee that are  
7                   unable to participate --

8                   THE CHAIRMAN: If the gentleman will suspend.

9                   MR. ROY: I'm going to have to be in the Subcommittee --

10                  THE CHAIRMAN: The gentleman will --

11                  MR. ROY: -- instead of being in here. And then I've  
12                  got to schedule access -- to get access as a Member of  
13                  Congress to transcripts on a committee on which I sit when  
14                  rules have never been put forward?

15                  THE CHAIRMAN: If the gentleman will suspend.

16                  MR. ROY: What is this?

17                  THE CHAIRMAN: The gentleman is not recognized. You can  
18                  take your comments outside, sir.

19                  MR. ROY: Take them outside to whom? You're the judge  
20                  and jury sitting in here deciding who can see this clown  
21                  show. When can we actually -- when can my colleagues who  
22                  aren't on this committee see the materials in question?

23                  THE CHAIRMAN: Sir, this witness has come all the way  
24                  from Ukraine. If you could suspend so we can get to the  
25                  matter at hand.

1                   MR. ROY: Well, why won't you address the legitimate  
2                   concerns of this --

3                   VOICES: Out of order.

4                   MR. ROY: This whole hearing is out of order. We've got  
5                   members of this committee --

6                   MRS. DEMINGS: You really don't want to hear from this  
7                   witness, do you?

8                   MR. ROY: I would like the entire Congress to hear from  
9                   this witness.

10                  THE CHAIRMAN: Members will suspend. Members will  
11                  suspend.

12                  Mr. Goldman, you're recognized.

13                  MR. ROY: What rules are we even operating under?

14                  MR. GOLDMAN: Ambassador Taylor, could you please state  
15                  your full name and spell your last name for the record?

16                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: William Brochenbrough Taylor, Jr.,  
17                  T-a-y-l-o-r.

18                  MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you.

19                  Now, along with other proceedings in furtherance of the  
20                  inquiry, this deposition is part of a joint investigation led  
21                  by the Intelligence Committee in coordination with the  
22                  Committees on Foreign Affairs and Oversight and Reform.

23                  In the room today are majority staff and minority staff  
24                  from both the Foreign Affairs Committee and Oversight  
25                  Committee, as well as majority and minority staff from the

1       Intelligence Committee. This is a staff-led deposition, but  
2       members, of course, may ask questions during their allotted  
3       time, as has been the case for every deposition and interview  
4       since the inception of this investigation.

5           My name is Daniel Goldman. I'm the director of  
6       investigations for the HPSCI majority staff, and I want to  
7       thank you very much for traveling from Ukraine to appear for  
8       this deposition today.

9           I would like to do some brief introductions. To my  
10       right is Daniel Noble, senior investigative counsel for  
11       HPSCI. Mr. Noble and I will be conducting most of the  
12       interview for the majority.

13           And I will now let my counterparts from the minority  
14       staff introduce themselves who will be conducting the  
15       interview for the minority.

16           MR. CASTOR: Morning, Ambassador. Steve Castor with the  
17       Republican staff of the Oversight Committee.

18           MS. CASULLI: Good morning. Laura Casulli, deputy  
19       general counsel, minority on the HPSCI.

20           MR. KOREN: Michael Koren, House Oversight, Republican  
21       committee staff.

22           MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you.

23           This deposition will be conducted entirely at the  
24       unclassified level. However, the deposition is being  
25       conducted in HPSCI's secure spaces and in the presence of

1 staff with appropriate security clearances. We also  
2 understand that your attorneys have the appropriate security  
3 clearances as well. Is that correct?

4 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct.

5 MR. GOLDMAN: Okay. It is the committee's expectation,  
6 however, that neither the questions asked of you nor the  
7 answers provided by you will require discussion of any  
8 information that is currently or at any point could be  
9 properly classified under Executive Order 13526.

10 You are reminded that E.O. 13526 states that, quote, in  
11 no case shall information be classified, continue to be  
12 maintained as classified, or fail to be declassified,  
13 unquote, for the purpose of concealing any violations of law  
14 or preventing embarrassment of any person or entity.

15 If any of our questions can only be answered with  
16 classified information, please inform us of that before you  
17 answer the question and we will adjust accordingly.

18 Today's deposition is not being taken in executive  
19 session, but because of the sensitive and confidential nature  
20 of some of the topics and materials that will be discussed  
21 access to the transcript of the deposition will be limited to  
22 the three committees in attendance, which we have mentioned  
23 before.

24 Under the House deposition rules, no Member of Congress  
25 nor any staff member can discuss the substance of the

1       testimony you provide today with the public or the media.  
2       You and your attorney will have an opportunity to review the  
3       transcript if we can figure out an arrangement, given that  
4       you are in post in Ukraine.

5           Before we begin, I'd like to go over some of the ground  
6       rules for this deposition. We will be following the House  
7       regulations for depositions, which we have previously  
8       provided to your counsel.

9           The deposition will proceed as follows: The majority  
10      will be given 1 hour to ask questions, and then the minority  
11      will be given 1 hour to ask questions. Thereafter, we will  
12      alternate back and forth between majority and minority in  
13      45-minute rounds until questioning is complete.

14           We will take periodic breaks, but if you need a break at  
15      any time, please do let us know.

16           Under the House deposition rules, counsel for other  
17      persons or government agencies may not attend. You are  
18      allowed to have an attorney present of your own during this  
19      deposition, and I see that you have brought two. Would  
20      counsel please now state their appearance for the record?

21           MR. SMITH: Jeffrey Smith, Arnold & Porter.

22           MR. BELLINGER: John Bellinger, Arnold & Porter.

23           MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you.

24           There is a stenographer to your left taking down  
25      everything that is said in this deposition in order to make a

1       written record. For that record to be clear, please wait  
2       until each question is completed before you begin your  
3       answer, and we will wait until you finish your response  
4       before asking you the next question.

5           The stenographer cannot record nonverbal answers, such  
6       as a shaking of your head, so it is important that you answer  
7       each question with an audible, verbal answer.

8           We ask that you give complete replies to questions based  
9       on your best recollection. If a question is unclear or you  
10       are uncertain in your response, please let us know. And if  
11       you do not know the answer to a question or cannot remember,  
12       simply say so.

13           You may only refuse to answer a question to preserve a  
14       privilege that is recognized by the committee. If you refuse  
15       to answer a question on the basis of privilege, staff may  
16       either proceed with the deposition or seek a ruling from the  
17       chairman on any objection in person or by telephone during  
18       the deposition at a time of the majority staff's choosing.  
19           If the chair overrules any such objection, you are required  
20       to answer the question.

21           And, finally, you are reminded that it is unlawful to  
22       deliberately provide false information to Members of Congress  
23       or staff. It is imperative that you not only answer our  
24       questions truthfully but that you give full and complete  
25       answers to all questions asked of you. Omissions may also be

1. considered as false statements.

2. As this deposition is under oath, Ambassador Taylor,  
3. would you please stand and raise your right hand to be sworn.  
4. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to  
5. give is the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

6. AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I do.

7. MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you. Let the record reflect that  
8. the witness has been sworn.

9. And, with that, Ambassador Taylor, if you have any  
10. opening remarks to make, now is the time.

11. AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, members, I appreciate  
12. the opportunity to appear here today to provide my  
13. perspective on the events that are the subject of the  
14. committees' inquiry. My sole purpose is to provide the  
15. committees with my views about the strategic importance of  
16. Ukraine to the United States, as well as additional  
17. information about the incidents in question.

18. I have dedicated my life to serving U.S. interests at  
19. home and abroad, in both military and civilian roles. My  
20. background and experience are nonpartisan, and I have been  
21. honored to serve under every administration, Republican and  
22. Democratic, since 1985.

23. For 50 years, I've served the country starting as a  
24. cadet at West Point; then as an infantry officer for 6 years,  
25. including with the 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam; then

1 at the Department of Energy; then as a member of a Senate  
2 staff; then at NATO; then with the State Department here and  
3 abroad in Afghanistan, Iraq, Jerusalem, and Ukraine; and,  
4 more recently, as executive vice president of the nonpartisan  
5 United States Institute of Peace.

6 While I have served in many places and in different  
7 capacities, I have a particular interest in and respect for  
8 the importance of our country's relationship with Ukraine.  
9 Our national security demands that this relationship remain  
10 strong.

11 However, in August and September of this year, I became  
12 increasingly concerned that our relationship with Ukraine was  
13 being fundamentally undermined by an irregular, informal  
14 channel of U.S. policymaking and by the withholding of vital  
15 security assistance for domestic political reasons. I hope  
16 my remarks today will help the committees understand why I  
17 believed that to be the case.

18 At the outset, I would like to convey several key  
19 points: First, Ukraine is a strategic partner of the United  
20 States, important for the security of our country as well as  
21 Europe; second, Ukraine is, right at this moment, while we  
22 sit in this room, and for the last 5 years, under armed  
23 attack from Russia; third, the security assistance we provide  
24 is crucial to Ukraine's defense against Russian aggression,  
25 and, more importantly, sends a signal to Ukrainians and

1       Russians that we are Ukraine's reliable strategic partner;  
2       and, finally, as the committees are now aware, I said on  
3       September 9th, in a message to Ambassador Gordon Sondland,  
4       that withholding security assistance in exchange for help  
5       with a domestic political campaign in the United States would  
6       be crazy. I believed that then, and I still believe that.

7           Let me now provide the committees a chronology of the  
8       events that led to my concern. On May 28th of this year, I  
9       met with Secretary Mike Pompeo who asked me to return to Kyiv  
10       to lead our Embassy in Ukraine. It was and is a critical  
11       time in the U.S.-Ukraine relations.

12       Volodymyr Zelensky had just been elected President, and  
13       Ukraine remained at war with Russia. As the summer  
14       approached, a new Ukrainian Government would be seated,  
15       parliamentary elections were imminent, and the Ukrainian  
16       political trajectory would be set for the next several years.

17       I had served as Ambassador to Ukraine from 2006 to 2009,  
18       having been nominated by George W. Bush. And in the  
19       intervening 10 years, I have stayed engaged with Ukraine  
20       visiting frequently since 2013 as a board member of a small  
21       Ukrainian, nongovernmental organization supporting good  
22       governance and reform.

23       Across the responsibilities I have had in public  
24       service, Ukraine is special for me, and Secretary Pompeo's  
25       offer to return as chief of mission was compelling. I am

1       convinced of the profound importance of Ukraine to the  
2       security of the United States and Europe for two related  
3       reasons: First, if Ukraine succeeds in breaking free of  
4       Russian influence, it is possible for Europe to be whole,  
5       free, democratic, and at peace. In contrast, if Russia  
6       dominates Ukraine, Russia will again become an empire,  
7       oppressing its people, and threatening its neighbors and the  
8       rest of the world.

9           Second, with the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the  
10      continued aggression in Donbas, Russia violated countless  
11      treaties, ignored all commitments, dismissed all the  
12      principles that have kept the peace and contributed to  
13      prosperity in Europe since World War II. To restore  
14      Ukraine's independence, Russia must leave Ukraine. This has  
15      been and should continue to be a bipartisan U.S. foreign  
16      policy goal.

17           When I was serving outside of government during the  
18      Obama administration and after the Russian invasion of  
19      Ukraine in 2014, I joined two other former Ambassadors to  
20      Ukraine in urging Obama administration officials at the State  
21      Department, Defense Department, and other agencies to provide  
22      lethal defensive weapons to Ukraine in order to deter further  
23      Russian aggression. I also supported much stronger sanctions  
24      against Russia.

25           All to say I cared about Ukraine's future and the

1       important U.S. interests there. So, when Secretary Pompeo  
2       asked me to go back to Kyiv, I wanted to say yes. But it was  
3       not an easy decision. The former Ambassador, Masha  
4       Yovanovitch, had been treated poorly, caught in a web of  
5       political machinations, both in Kyiv and in Washington. I  
6       feared that those problems were still present. When I talked  
7       to her about accepting the offer, however, she urged me to go  
8       for both policy reasons and for the morale of the Embassy.

9           Before answering the Secretary, I consulted both my wife  
10      and a respected former senior Republican official who has  
11      been a mentor to me. I will tell you, my wife, in no  
12      uncertain terms, strongly opposed the idea. The mentor  
13      counseled: If your country asks you to do something, you do  
14      it -- if you can be effective.

15       I could be effective only if the U.S. policy of strong  
16      support for Ukraine, strong diplomatic support, along with  
17      robust security, economic, and technical assistance were to  
18      continue, and if I had the backing of the Secretary of State  
19      to implement that policy. I worried about what I had heard  
20      concerning the role of Rudolph Giuliani, who had made several  
21      high-profile statements about Ukraine and U.S. policy toward  
22      the country.

23       So, during my meeting with Secretary Pompeo, on  
24      May 28th, I made clear to him and the others present that if  
25      U.S. policy toward Ukraine changed, he would not want me

1 posted there and I could not stay. He assured me that the  
2 policy of strong support for Ukraine would continue and that  
3 he would support me in defending that policy.

4 With that understanding, I agreed to go back to Kyiv.  
5 Because I was appointed by the Secretary but not reconfirmed  
6 by the Senate, my official position was Charge d'affaires ad  
7 interim. I returned to Kyiv on June 17th carrying the  
8 original copy of a letter President Trump signed the day  
9 after I met with the Secretary.

10 In that letter, President Trump congratulated President  
11 Zelensky on his election victory and invited him to a meeting  
12 in the Oval Office. I also brought with me a framed copy of  
13 the Secretary's declaration that the United States would  
14 never recognize the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea.

15 But once I arrived in Kyiv, I discovered a weird  
16 combination of encouraging, confusing, and ultimately  
17 alarming circumstances. First, encouraging: President  
18 Zelensky was taking over Ukraine in a hurry. He had  
19 appointed reformist ministers and supported long-stalled  
20 anticorruption legislation. He took quick executive action,  
21 including opening Ukraine's High Anti-Corruption Court, which  
22 was established under previous Presidential administration  
23 but was never allowed to operate.

24 He called snap parliamentary elections -- his party was  
25 so new it had no representation in the Rada -- and later won

1 an overwhelming mandate controlling 60 percent of the seats.  
2 With his new parliamentary majority, President Zelensky  
3 changed the Ukrainian constitution to remove absolute  
4 immunity from Rada deputies, which had been the source of raw  
5 corruption for decades. There was much excitement in Kyiv  
6 that this time things could be different. A new Ukraine  
7 might finally be breaking from its corrupt, post-Soviet past.

8 And, yet, I found a confusing and unusual arrangement  
9 for making U.S. policy towards Ukraine. There appeared to be  
10 two channels of U.S. policymaking and implementation, one  
11 regular and one highly irregular.

12 As the chief of mission, I had authority over the  
13 regular, formal diplomatic processes, including the bulk of  
14 the U.S. effort to support Ukraine against the Russian  
15 invasion and to help it defeat corruption.

16 This regular channel of U.S. policymaking has  
17 consistently had strong bipartisan support, both in Congress  
18 and in all administrations since Ukraine's independence from  
19 Russia in 1991.

20 At the same time, however, there was an irregular,  
21 informal channel of U.S. policymaking with respect to  
22 Ukraine, one which included then-Special Envoy Kurt Volker,  
23 Ambassador Sondland, Secretary of Energy Rick Perry, and as I  
24 subsequently learned, Mr. Giuliani. I was clearly in the  
25 regular channel, but I was also in the irregular one to the

1 extent that Ambassadors Volker and Sondland included me in  
2 certain conversations.

3 Although this irregular channel was well connected in  
4 Washington, it operated mostly outside of official State  
5 Department channels. This irregular channel began when  
6 Ambassador Volker, Ambassador Sondland, Secretary Perry, and  
7 Senator Ron Johnson briefed President Trump on May 23rd upon  
8 their return from President Zelensky's inauguration.

9 The delegation returned to Washington enthusiastic about  
10 the new Ukrainian President and urged President Trump to meet  
11 with him early on to cement the U.S. Ukraine relationship.  
12 But from what I understood, President Trump did not share  
13 their enthusiasm for a meeting with Mr. Zelensky.

14 When I first arrived in Kyiv in June and July, the  
15 actions of both the regular and irregular channels of foreign  
16 policy served the same goal, a strong U.S.-Ukraine  
17 partnership, but it became clear to me by August that the  
18 channels had diverged in their objectives. As this occurred,  
19 I became increasingly concerned.

20 In late June, one of the goals of both channels was to  
21 facilitate a visit by President Zelensky to the White House  
22 for a meeting with President Trump, which President Trump had  
23 promised in his congratulatory letter of May 29th.  
24 Ukrainians were clearly eager for the meeting to happen.

25 During a conference call with Ambassador Volker, Acting

1 Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian  
2 Affairs Phil Reeker, Secretary Perry, Ambassador Sondland,  
3 and Counselor of the U.S. Department of State Ulrich  
4 Brechbuhl on June 18th, it was clear that a meeting between  
5 the two Presidents was an agreed-on -- agreed-upon goal.

6 But during my subsequent communications with Ambassadors  
7 Volker and Sondland, they relayed to me that the President  
8 wanted to hear from Zelensky before scheduling the meeting in  
9 the Oval Office. It was not clear to me what this meant.

10 On June 27th, Ambassador Sondland told me during a phone  
11 conversation that President Zelensky needed to make clear to  
12 President Trump that he, President Zelensky, was not standing  
13 in the way of investigations.

14 I sensed something odd when Ambassador Sondland told me  
15 on June 28th that he did not wish to include most of the  
16 regular interagency participants in a call planned with  
17 President Zelensky later that day.

18 Ambassador Sondland, Ambassador Volker, Secretary Perry,  
19 and I were on this call dialing in from different locations.  
20 However, Ambassador Sondland said that he wanted to make sure  
21 no one was transcribing or monitoring as they added President  
22 Zelensky to the call.

23 Also, before President Zelensky joined the call,  
24 Ambassador Volker separately told the U.S. participants that  
25 he, Ambassador Volker, planned to be explicit with President

1       Zelensky in a one-on-one meeting in Toronto on July 2nd about  
2       what President Zelensky should do to get the meeting in the  
3       White House.

4           Again, it was not clear to me on that call what this  
5       meant, but Ambassador Volker noted that he would relay that  
6       President Trump wanted to see rule of law, transparency, but  
7       also, specifically, cooperation on investigations to get to  
8       the bottom of things.

9           Once President Zelensky joined the call, the  
10      conversation was focused on energy policy and the  
11      Stanystsia-Luhanska bridge in Donbas. President Zelensky  
12      also said that he looked forward to the White House visit  
13      President Trump had offered in his May 29th letter.

14           I reported on this call to Deputy Assistant Secretary of  
15       State George Kent who had responsibility for Ukraine, and I  
16       wrote a memo for the record, dated June 30th, that summarized  
17       our conversation with President Zelensky.

18           By mid-July, it was becoming clear to me that the  
19       meeting President Zelensky wanted was conditioned on  
20       investigations of Burisma and alleged Ukrainian influence in  
21       the 2016 elections. It was also clear that this condition  
22       was driven by the irregular policy channel I had come to  
23       understand was guided by Mr. Giuliani.

24           On July 10, Ukrainian officials Alexander Danyliuk, the  
25       Ukrainian National Security Advisor; Andrey Yermak, an

1 assistant to President Zelensky; and Secretary Perry;  
2 then-National Security Advisor John Bolton; Ambassador  
3 Volker; and Ambassador Sondland met at the White House. I  
4 did not participate in the meeting and did not receive a  
5 readout of it until speaking with the National Security  
6 Council's then-senior director for European and Russian  
7 affairs, Fiona Hill, and the NSC's director for European  
8 affairs, Alex Vindman, on July 19th.

9                   On July 10, in Kyiv, I met with President Zelensky's  
10                  Chief of Staff, Andrei Bohdan, and then-foreign policy  
11                  adviser to the President and now Foreign Minister Vadym  
12                  Prystaiko, who told me that they had heard from Mr. Giuliani  
13                  that the phone call between the two Presidents was unlikely  
14                  to happen and that they were alarmed and disappointed. I  
15                  relayed their concerns to Counselor Brechbuhl.

16                   In a regular, NSC secure video conference call on  
17                   July 18th, I heard a staff person from the Office of  
18                   Management and Budget say that there was a hold on security  
19                   assistance to Ukraine but could not say why. Toward the end  
20                   of this otherwise normal meeting, a voice on the call, the  
21                   person who was off screen, said that she was from OMB and her  
22                   boss had instructed her not to approve any additional  
23                   spending of security assistance for Ukraine until further  
24                   notice.

25 I and the others on the call sat in astonishment. The

1        Ukrainians were fighting the Russians and counted on not only  
2        the training and weapons but also the assurance of U.S.  
3        support. All that the OMB staff person said was that the  
4        directive had come from the President to the Chief of Staff  
5        to OMB. In an instant, I realized that one of the key  
6        pillars of our strong support for Ukraine was threatened.

7           The irregular policy channel was running contrary to the  
8        goals of longstanding U.S. policy. There followed a series  
9        of NSC-led interagency meetings starting at the staff level  
10       and quickly reaching the level of Cabinet Secretaries. At  
11       every meeting, the unanimous conclusion was that the security  
12       assistance should be reassumed, the hold lifted.

13        At one point the Defense Department was asked to perform  
14        an analysis of the effectiveness of the assistance. Within a  
15        day, the Defense Department came back with the determination  
16        that the assistance was effective and should be resumed.

17        My understanding was that the Secretaries of Defense and  
18        State, the CIA Director, and the National Security Advisor,  
19        sought a joint meeting with the President to convince him to  
20        release the hold, but such meeting was hard to schedule, and  
21        the hold lasted well into September.

22        The next day on the phone, Dr. Hill and Mr. Vindman  
23        tried to reassure me that they were not aware of any official  
24        change in U.S. policy toward Ukraine, OMB's announcement  
25        notwithstanding. They did confirm that the hold on security

1 assistance for Ukraine came from Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney  
2 and that the Chief of Staff maintained a skeptical view of  
3 Ukraine.

4 In the same July 19th phone call, they gave me an  
5 account of the July 10th meeting with the Ukrainian officials  
6 at the White House. Specifically, they told me that  
7 Ambassador Sondland had connected investigations with an Oval  
8 Office meeting for President Zelensky, which so irritated  
9 Ambassador Bolton that he abruptly ended the meeting, telling  
10 Dr. Hill and Mr. Vindman that they should have nothing to do  
11 with domestic politics.

12 He also directed Dr. Hill to brief the lawyers.  
13 Dr. Hill said that Ambassador Bolton referred to this as a  
14 drug deal after the July 10th meeting. Ambassador Bolton  
15 opposed a call between President Zelensky and President Trump  
16 out of concern that it would be a disaster.

17 Needless to say, the two Ukrainians in the meetings were  
18 confused. Ambassador Bolton, in the regular Ukraine policy  
19 decisionmaking channel, wanted to talk about security,  
20 energy, and reform. Ambassador Sondland, a participant in  
21 the irregular channel, wanted to talk about the connection  
22 between a White House meeting and Ukrainian investigations.

23 Also, during our July 19th call, Dr. Hill informed me  
24 that Ambassador Volker had met with Mr. Giuliani to discuss  
25 Ukraine. This caught me by surprise. The next day, I asked

1 Ambassador Volker about that meeting but received no  
2 response. I began to sense that the two decisionmaking  
3 channels, regular and irregular, were separate and at odds.

4 Later on July 19th and in the early morning of  
5 July 20th, Kyiv time, I received text messages on a three-way  
6 WhatsApp text conversation with Ambassadors Volker and  
7 Sondland, a record of which I understand has already been  
8 provided to the committees by Ambassador Volker.

9 Ambassador Sondland said that a call between President  
10 Trump and President Zelensky would take place soon.

11 Ambassador Volker said that it was most important for  
12 Zelensky to say that he will help investigation and address  
13 any specific personnel issues, if there are any.

14 Later on July 20th, I had a phone conversation with  
15 Ambassador Sondland while he was on a train from Paris to  
16 London. Ambassador Sondland told me that he had recommended  
17 to President Zelensky that he use the phrase, "I will leave  
18 no stone unturned" with regard to investigations when  
19 President Zelensky spoke with President Trump.

20 Also, on July 20th, I had a phone conversation with  
21 Mr. Danyliuk, during which he conveyed to me that President  
22 Zelensky did not want to be used as a pawn in a U.S.  
23 reelection campaign. The next day, I texted both Ambassadors  
24 Volker and Sondland about President Zelensky's concern.

25 On July 25th, President Trump and President Zelensky had

1           the long-awaited phone conversation. Strangely, even though  
2           I was chief of mission and was scheduled to meet with  
3           President Zelensky along with Ambassador Volker the following  
4           day, I received no readout of the call from the White House.  
5           The Ukrainian Government issued a short, cryptic summary.

6           During a previously planned July 26th meeting, President  
7           Zelensky told Ambassador Volker and me that he was happy with  
8           the call, but he did not elaborate. President Zelensky then  
9           asked me about the face-to-face meeting in the Oval Office as  
10           promised in the May 29th letter from President Trump.

11           After our meeting with President Zelensky, Ambassador  
12           Volker and I traveled to the frontline in northern Donbas to  
13           receive a briefing from the commander of the forces on the  
14           line of contact. Arriving for the briefing in the military  
15           headquarters, the commander thanked us for security  
16           assistance, but I was aware that this assistance was on hold,  
17           which made me uncomfortable.

18           Ambassador Volker and I could see the armed and hostile  
19           Russian-led forces on the other side of the damaged bridge  
20           across the line of contact. Over 13,000 Ukrainians had been  
21           killed in the war, one or two a week. To this day, that  
22           continues. More Ukrainians would undoubtedly die without  
23           U.S. assistance.

24           Although I spent the morning of July 26th with President  
25           Zelensky and other Ukrainian officials, the first summary of

1 the Trump-Zelensky call that I heard from anybody inside the  
2 U.S. Government was during a phone call I had with Tim  
3 Morrison, Dr. Hill's recent replacement at the NSC, on  
4 July 28th. Mr. Morrison told me that the call could have  
5 been better and that President Trump had suggested that  
6 President Zelensky or his staff meet with Mr. Giuliani and  
7 Attorney General William Barr. I did not see any official  
8 readout of the call until it was publicly released on  
9 September 25th.

10 On August 16, I exchanged text messages with Ambassador  
11 Volker, in which I learned that Mr. Yermak had asked that the  
12 United States submit an official request for an investigation  
13 into Burisma's alleged violations of Ukrainian law, if that's  
14 what the United States desired.

15 A formal U.S. request to the Ukrainians to conduct an  
16 investigation based on violations of their own law struck me  
17 as improper, and I recommended to Ambassador Volker that we  
18 stay clear. To find out the legal aspects of the question,  
19 however, I gave him the name of a Deputy Assistant Attorney  
20 General whom I thought would be the proper point of contact  
21 for seeking a U.S. referral for a foreign investigation.

22 By mid-August, because the security assistance had been  
23 held for over a month for no reason that I could discern, I  
24 was beginning to fear that the longstanding U.S. policy of  
25 strong support for Ukraine was shifting. I called Counselor

1                   Brechbuhl to discuss this on August 21st. He said that he  
2                   was not aware of a change of U.S. policy but would check on  
3                   the status of the security assistance.

4                   My concern deepened the next day, on August 22nd, during  
5                   a phone call with Mr. Morrison. I asked him if there had  
6                   been a change in policy of strong support for Ukraine, to  
7                   which he responded: It remains to be seen.

8                   He also told me during this call that the President  
9                   doesn't want to provide any assistance at all. That was  
10                   extremely troubling to me. As I had told Secretary Pompeo in  
11                   May, if the policy of strong support for Ukraine were to  
12                   change, I would have to resign. Based on my call with  
13                   Mr. Morrison, I was preparing to do so.

14                   Just days later, on August 27th, Ambassador Bolton  
15                   arrived in Kyiv and met with President Zelensky. During  
16                   their meeting, security assistance was not discussed.  
17                   Amazingly, news of the hold on security assistance did not  
18                   leak out until August 29th. I, on the other hand, was all  
19                   too aware of and still troubled by the hold.

20                   Near the end of Ambassador Bolton's visit, I asked to  
21                   meet him privately, during which I expressed to him my  
22                   serious concern about the withholding of military assistance  
23                   to Ukraine while the Ukrainians were defending their country  
24                   from Russian aggression.

25                   Ambassador Bolton recommended that I send a first-person

1       cable to Secretary Pompeo directly, relaying my concerns. I  
2       wrote and transmitted such a cable on August 29th describing  
3       the folly I saw in withholding military aid to Ukraine at a  
4       time when hostilities were still active in the east and when  
5       Russia was watching closely to gauge the level of American  
6       support for the Ukrainian Government.

7           I told the Secretary that I could not and would not  
8       defend such a policy. Although I received no specific  
9       response, I heard that, soon thereafter, the Secretary  
10       carried the cable with him to a meeting at the White House  
11       focused on security assistance for Ukraine.

12           The same day that I sent my cable to the Secretary,  
13       August 29, Mr. Yermak contacted me and was very concerned,  
14       asking about the withheld security assistance. The hold that  
15       the White House had placed on the assistance had just been  
16       made public that day in a political story. At that point, I  
17       was embarrassed that I could not give him any explanation for  
18       why it was withheld.

19           It had still not occurred to me that the hold on  
20       security assistance could be related to the investigations.  
21       That, however, would change.

22           On September 1st, just 3 days after my cable to  
23       Secretary Pompeo, President Zelensky met Vice President Pence  
24       at a bilateral meeting in Warsaw. President Trump had  
25       planned to travel to Warsaw but at the last minute had

1 canceled because of Hurricane Dorian.

2 Just hours before the Pence-Zelensky meeting, I  
3 contacted Mr. Danyliuk to let him know that the delay of U.S.  
4 security assistance was an all-or-nothing proposition, in the  
5 sense that if the White House did not lift the hold prior to  
6 the end of the fiscal year, September 30th, the funds would  
7 expire and Ukraine would receive nothing.

8 I was hopeful that, at the bilateral meeting or shortly  
9 thereafter, the White House would lift the hold, but this was  
10 not to be. Indeed, I received a readout of the  
11 Pence-Zelensky meeting over the phone for Mr. Morrison,  
12 during which he told me President Zelensky had opened the  
13 meeting by asking the Vice President about security  
14 cooperation.

15 The Vice President did not respond substantively but  
16 said he would talk to President Trump that night. The Vice  
17 President did say that President Trump wanted the Europeans  
18 to do more to support Ukraine and that he wanted Ukrainians  
19 to do more to fight corruption.

20                   During this same phone call I had with Mr. Morrison, he  
21                   went on to describe a conversation Ambassador Sondland had  
22                   with Mr. Yermak at Warsaw. Ambassador Sondland told  
23                   Mr. Yermak that the security assistance money would not come  
24                   until President Zelensky committed to pursue the Burisma  
25                   investigation.

1           I was alarmed by what Mr. Morrison told me about the  
2           Sondland-Yermak conversation. This was the first time I had  
3           heard that security assistance, not just the White House  
4           meeting, was conditioned on the investigations.

5           Very concerned, on that same day, I sent Ambassador  
6           Sondland a text message asking if we are now saying that  
7           security assistance and a White House meeting are conditioned  
8           on investigations. Ambassador Sondland responded asking me  
9           to call him, which I did.

10           During that phone call, Ambassador Sondland told me that  
11           President Trump had told him that he wants President Zelensky  
12           to state publicly that Ukraine will investigate Burisma and  
13           alleged Ukrainian interference in the 2016 U.S. election.

14           Ambassador Sondland also told me that he now recognized  
15           that he had made a mistake by earlier telling Ukrainian  
16           officials to whom he spoke that a White House meeting with  
17           President Zelensky was dependent on a public announcement of  
18           investigations. In fact, Ambassador Sondland said everything  
19           was dependent on such an announcement, including security  
20           assistance. He said that President Trump wanted President  
21           Zelensky in a box by making public statement about ordering  
22           such investigations.

23           In the same September 1st call, I told Ambassador  
24           Sondland that President Trump should have more respect for  
25           another head of state and that what he described was not in

1       the interest of either President Trump or President Zelensky.  
2       At that point, I asked Ambassador Sondland to push back on  
3       President Trump's demand. Ambassador Sondland pledged to  
4       try.

5           We also discussed the possibility that Ukrainian  
6       prosecutor general, rather than President Zelensky, would  
7       make a statement about investigations, potentially in  
8       coordination with Attorney General Barr's probe into the  
9       investigation of interference in the 2016 elections.

10          The next day, September 2nd, Mr. Morrison called to  
11       inform me that Mr. Danyliuk had asked him to come to his  
12       hotel room in Warsaw where Mr. Danyliuk expressed concern  
13       about the possible loss of U.S. support for Ukraine.

14          In particular, Mr. Morrison relayed to me that the  
15       inability of any U.S. officials to respond to Ukraine's  
16       explicit questions about security assistance was troubling  
17       them. I was experiencing the same tension in my dealings  
18       with the Ukrainians, including a meeting that I had had with  
19       Defense Minister Andriy Zagordnyuk that day.

20          During my call with Mr. Morrison on September 2nd, I  
21       also briefed Mr. Morrison on what Ambassador Sondland had  
22       told me during our call the day prior.

23          On September 5th, I hosted Senators Johnson and Murphy  
24       for a visit to Kyiv. During their visit, we met with  
25       President Zelensky. His first question to the Senators was

1       about the withheld security assistance. My recollection of  
2       the meeting is that both Senators stressed that bipartisan  
3       support for Ukraine in Washington was Ukraine's most  
4       important strategic asset and that President Zelensky should  
5       not jeopardize that bipartisan support by getting drawn into  
6       U.S. domestic politics.

7           I had been making, and continue to make, this point to  
8       all of my Ukrainian official contacts. But the push to make  
9       President Zelensky publicly commit to investigations of  
10       Burisma and alleged interference in the 2016 elections showed  
11       how the official foreign policy of the United States was  
12       undercut by the irregular efforts led by Mr. Giuliani.

13           Two days later, on September 7th, I had a conversation  
14       with Mr. Morrison in which he described a phone conversation  
15       earlier that day between Ambassadors Sondland and President  
16       Trump. Mr. Morrison said that he had a sinking feeling after  
17       learning about this conversation from Ambassador Sondland.

18           According to Mr. Morrison, President Trump told  
19       Ambassador Sondland that he was not asking for a quid pro  
20       quo. But President Trump did insist that President Zelensky  
21       go to a microphone and say he is opening investigations of  
22       Biden and 2016 election interference, and that President  
23       Zelensky should want to do this himself. Mr. Morrison said  
24       that he told Ambassador Bolton and the NSC lawyers of this  
25       phone call between President Trump and Ambassador Sondland.

1           The following day, on September 8th, Ambassador Sondland  
2 and I spoke on the phone. He said he had talked to President  
3 Trump, as I had suggested a week earlier, but that President  
4 Trump was adamant that President Zelensky himself had to  
5 clear things up and do it in public. President Trump said it  
6 was not a quid pro quo.

7           Ambassador Sondland said that he had talked to President  
8 Zelensky and Mr. Yermak and told them that, although this was  
9 not a quid pro quo, if President Zelensky did not clear  
10 things up in public, we would be at a stalemate. I  
11 understood a stalemate to mean that Ukraine would not receive  
12 the much-needed military assistance. Ambassador Sondland  
13 said that this conversation concluded with President Zelensky  
14 agreeing to make a public statement in an interview with CNN.

15           After the call with Ambassador Sondland on  
16 September 8th, I expressed my strong reservations in a text  
17 message to Ambassador Sondland stating: My nightmare is that  
18 the Ukrainians give the interview and don't get the security  
19 assistance. The Russians love it. And I quit.

20           I was serious.

21           The next day I said to Ambassadors Sondland and Volker  
22 that the message to the Ukrainians and Russians we send with  
23 the decision on security assistance is key. With the hold,  
24 we have already shaken their faith in us. I also said, I  
25 think it's crazy to withhold security assistance for help

1 with a political campaign.

2 Ambassador Sondland responded about 5 hours later that I  
3 was incorrect about President Trump's intentions. The  
4 President has been crystal clear: No quid pro quos of any  
5 kind.

6 Before these text messages, during our call on  
7 September 8th, Ambassador Sondland tried to explain to me  
8 that President Trump is a businessman. When a businessman is  
9 about to sign a check to someone who owes him something, he  
10 said, the businessman asks that person to pay up before  
11 signing the check.

12 Ambassador Volker used the same terms several days later  
13 when we were together at the Yalta European Strategy  
14 Conference in Kyiv. I argued to both that the explanation  
15 made no sense. The Ukrainians did not owe President Trump  
16 anything, and holding up security assistance for domestic  
17 political gain was crazy, as I had said in my text message to  
18 Ambassador Sondland and Volker on September 9th.

19 Finally, I learned on September 11th that the hold had  
20 been lifted and security assistance would be provided. After  
21 I learned that the security assistance was released on  
22 September 11th, I personally conveyed the news to President  
23 Zelensky and Foreign Minister Prystaiko. And I again  
24 reminded Mr. Yermak of the high strategic value of bipartisan  
25 support for Ukraine and the importance of not getting

1                   involved in other countries' elections.

2                   My fear at the time was that, since Ambassador Sondland  
3                   had told me President Zelensky had already agreed to do a CNN  
4                   interview, President Zelensky would make a statement  
5                   regarding investigations that would have played into domestic  
6                   U.S. politics. I sought to confirm through Mr. Danyliuk that  
7                   President Zelensky was not planning to give such an interview  
8                   to the media.

9                   While Mr. Danyliuk initially confirmed that on  
10                   September 12th, I noticed during a meeting on the morning of  
11                   September 13th, at President Zelensky's office, that  
12                   Mr. Yermak looked uncomfortable in response to the question.  
13                   Again, I asked Mr. Danyliuk to confirm that there would be no  
14                   CNN interview, which he did.

15                   On September 25th, at the U.N. General Assembly session  
16                   in New York City, President Trump met President Zelensky  
17                   face-to-face. He also released a transcript of the July 25th  
18                   call. The United States gave the Ukrainians virtually no  
19                   notice of the release, and they were livid.

20                   Although this was the first time I had seen the details  
21                   of President Trump's July 25th call with President Zelensky  
22                   in which he mentioned Vice President Biden, I had come to  
23                   understand well before then that "investigations" was a term  
24                   Ambassadors Volker and Sondland used to mean matters related  
25                   to the 2016 elections and to investigations of Burisma and

1 the Bidens.

2 Mr. Chairman, I recognize this is a rather lengthy  
3 recitation of the events of the past few months, told from my  
4 vantage point in Kyiv. But I also recognize the importance  
5 of the matters your committees are investigating, and I hope  
6 that this chronology will provide some framework for your  
7 questions.

8 I wish to conclude by returning to the points I made at  
9 the outset: Ukraine is important to the security of the  
10 United States. It has been attacked by Russia, which  
11 continues its aggression against Ukraine. If we believe in  
12 the principle of sovereignty of nations on which our security  
13 and the security of our friends and allies depends, we must  
14 support Ukraine in its fight against its bullying neighbor.  
15 Russian aggression cannot stand.

16 There are two Ukraine stories today, Mr. Chairman. The  
17 first is the one we are discussing this morning and that you  
18 have been hearing for the past 2 weeks. It's a rancorous  
19 story about whistleblowers, Mr. Giuliani, side channels, quid  
20 pro quos, corruption, interference in elections. In this  
21 story Ukraine is an object.

22 But there's another Ukraine story, a positive,  
23 bipartisan one. In this second story, Ukraine is the  
24 subject. This one is about young people in a young nation  
25 struggling to break free of its past, hopeful their new

1 government will finally usher in a new Ukraine, proud of its  
2 independence from Russia, eager to join Western institutions  
3 and enjoy a more secure and prosperous life.

4 This story describes a Nation developing an inclusive,  
5 democratic nationalism, not unlike what we in America, in our  
6 best moments, feel about our diverse country -- less  
7 concerned about what language we speak; what religion, if  
8 any, we practice; where our parents and grandparents came  
9 from -- more concerned about building a new country.

10 Because of the strategic importance of Ukraine and our  
11 effort to create a whole, free Europe, we, through Republican  
12 and Democratic administrations over three decades, have  
13 supported Ukraine. Congress has been very generous over the  
14 years with assistance funding, both civilian and military,  
15 and political support.

16 With overwhelming bipartisan majorities, Congress has  
17 supported Ukraine with harsh sanctions on Russia for invading  
18 and occupying Ukraine. We can be proud of that support and  
19 that we have stood up to a dictator's aggression against a  
20 democratic neighbor.

21 This second story, Mr. Chairman, is the one I would like  
22 to leave you with today. And I'm glad to answer your  
23 questions.

24 [The information follows:]

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1                   THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, thank you. We're just trying  
2 to process what you said. Thank you for your detailed  
3 opening statement.

4                   I recognize Mr. Goldman now for an hour of questions by  
5 the majority to be followed by an hour of questions from the  
6 minority.

7                   BY MR. GOLDMAN:

8                   Q     Thank you, Ambassador Taylor. Thank you for the  
9 detailed opening statement. We obviously just received it,  
10 and we'll do our best not to be too repetitive.

11                  It is incredibly detailed, and I note that you mention  
12 that you wrote a memo to file on June 30th and that you sent  
13 a cable to Secretary Pompeo on August 27. Can you tell us  
14 whether there were any other documents that you relied upon  
15 in putting together this opening statement today?

16                  A     Yes. Three sources, I guess. One you are familiar  
17 with are the texts of WhatsApp messages that Ambassador  
18 Volker, Ambassador Sondland, and I exchanged. There were  
19 other WhatsApp messages that I exchanged with Ukrainian  
20 officials and other American officials, all of which, like  
21 Ambassador Volker's package, I have provided to the State  
22 Department. That's number one.

23                  Number two, I've always kept careful notes, and I keep a  
24 little notebook where I take notes on conversations, in  
25 particular when I'm not in the office. So, in meetings with

1        Ukrainian officials or when I'm out and I get a phone call  
2        and I can -- I keep notes.

3        The third documents are handwritten notes that I take on  
4        a small, little spiral notebook in my office of phone calls  
5        that take place in my office. So those, I think, are the  
6        three sources of information that you see here. You will see  
7        some quotes and those are quotes from either the WhatsApp  
8        texts or from my notes.

9            Q        And have you provided all of those documents to the  
10        State Department?

11          A        I have.

12          Q        At their request. Is that right?

13          A        At their request. I think in response to your  
14        subpoena to the State Department, they did a document search  
15        which came, of course, to Embassy Kyiv, applied to the State  
16        Department. We did a search of all of our documents,  
17        including the ones I just mentioned, and sent them into the  
18        State Department.

19          Q        Okay. And I assume that you are aware that, other  
20        than the WhatsApp messages that Ambassador Volker provided to  
21        the committees, the committees have not received any of these  
22        documents from the State Department?

23          A        I assumed that, but I didn't know that until you  
24        confirmed it.

25          Q        Okay. But you remain in possession of your

1 personal documents?

2 A I do.

3 Q Okay. Prior to your testimony here today, did you  
4 have any discussions with anyone at the State Department  
5 about your testimony?

6 A No.

7 Q Did you receive any instructions from the State  
8 Department about your testimony?

9 A Yes. Let me be clear, I had no substantive  
10 conversations with anyone about testimony. I have been in  
11 touch. As soon as I got your invitation, I, as instructed,  
12 talked to our congressional liaison and in turn our legal  
13 office, which John Bellinger knows something about. And they  
14 gave me instructions on how I was to proceed. So I've had  
15 those conversations with them, with what we call H and L.  
16 People in the room are probably familiar with both.

17 Q Right. But you did not show this opening statement  
18 to anyone at the State Department?

19 A That's correct.

20 Q And you did not receive any guidance about what you  
21 could testify about here today?

22 A The guidance I got was to be sure not to talk about  
23 classified material or anything having to do with privilege,  
24 and I think I've abided by those. I'm not sure exactly what  
25 the privilege constraint is. I don't think I have violated

1       that, and I've certainly not violated anything else.

2           [Discussion off the record.]

3       AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Ah, good point. I was also  
4       instructed not to appear. That's an important instruction.

5           BY MR. GOLDMAN:

6       Q       Okay.

7       A       And in that message, that letter, it said not to  
8       appear under current circumstances. My interpretation of  
9       that is, when I got a subpoena, that those were different  
10      circumstances.

11      Q       Right. A subpoena compels your testimony, correct,  
12      and that's why you're here today?

13      A       Yes, sir.

14      Q       You indicated that you struggled a little bit over  
15      the decision whether or not to take the offer to be the  
16      Charge to the mission in Kyiv. Can you describe in a little  
17      bit more detail why you struggled with that decision?

18      A       Yes. A couple of reasons. So I was approached  
19      with the idea of going back out to Kyiv by Ambassador Volker  
20      and then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent  
21      about the time, this would have been like April, May, when it  
22      was possible that Ambassador Yovanovitch would be coming back  
23      before the regular end of her term.

24      I, of course, was following events in Ukraine, not as  
25      closely then as I do now, but was certainly -- as I mentioned

1       in my statement, I cared a lot about the place. I had seen  
2       press reports of the intent of Mr. Giuliani to travel to  
3       Ukraine, to pursue these investigations that I've mentioned a  
4       couple times in my opening statement, with the intent of  
5       using that information in political campaigns.

6           I knew of the -- I knew the people that Giuliani had  
7       been talking to in Ukraine. I knew the prosecutor general,  
8       Mr. Lutsenko. I knew that Mr. Lutsenko had given interviews  
9       to American media which were pretty negative about both  
10       United States and about the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, in  
11       particular the Ambassador and the deputy chief of mission.

12           So I knew that they were -- I put it -- I knew there  
13       were problems in Kyiv, and I knew there were problems in  
14       Washington. I knew that Secretary Pompeo had received a  
15       letter from a Member of Congress or maybe a former Member of  
16       Congress -- he's certainly a former Member of Congress now --  
17       saying that Masha Yovanovitch, Ambassador Yovanovitch, should  
18       be removed. All to say that I was concerned that there  
19       was -- I think I put it -- a snake pit in Kyiv and a snake  
20       pit here, and I was not sure that I could usefully serve in  
21       that context.

22

23

24

25

1 [10:53 a.m.]

2 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

3 Q That letter you referenced is from former  
4 Representative Pete Sessions? Is that what you're talking  
5 about?

6 A Correct.

7 Q In May of 2018?

8 A Correct.

9 Q How did you know about that?

10 A I suppose I had heard that from the State  
11 Department -- from Mr. Kent. I don't know that.

12 Q What did you know about the circumstances  
13 surrounding Ambassador Yovanovitch's removal?

14 A So I met Ambassador Yovanovitch in Kyiv on several  
15 occasions that spring, last spring. From my position at the  
16 United States Institute of Peace, I was an election observer,  
17 an international election observer, for the two rounds of the  
18 Presidential election. And on both those visits to Kyiv,  
19 those were separated by 3 weeks. So both of those visits I  
20 would check in of course with the embassy and sat down with  
21 Masha Yovanovitch, with Ambassador Yovanovitch.

22 We talked in Kyiv about what was going on there and this  
23 was disturbing to her. When I came back from those trips, I  
24 didn't think much more about that until I got a phone call  
25 from George Kent, Deputy Assistant Secretary George Kent,

1        asking hypothetically, he said, would I be willing to go back  
2        out to Ukraine, which was odd because we have an Ambassador  
3        out there and this gave me some sense that something was  
4        going on here. Shortly thereafter, he called up and said,  
5        it's not hypothetical anymore. Will you go back out? And  
6        that prompted me to do some checking and this kind of  
7        business.

8            When Ambassador Yovanovitch came back in what, late May,  
9        I think that's right, I talked to her about this and she  
10        described the circumstances under which she came back.

11        Q        Did you have any understanding as to whether the  
12        allegations that were levied against her had any basis in  
13        fact?

14        A        No, because I don't think there were allegations --  
15        well, as she's testified, she was told by the deputy  
16        secretary of State that she had done nothing wrong. So there  
17        were no allegations of -- as far as any official channel that  
18        she had done anything wrong.

19        Q        Were you aware of allegations in the media against  
20        her?

21        A        The allegations in the media were that she was  
22        tough on corruption. Now, that doesn't sound so bad, that's  
23        what an Ambassador out there has do. She was very frank, she  
24        was very direct. She made points very clearly, and she was  
25        indeed tough on corruption, and she named names and that

1 sometimes is controversial out there, but she's a strong  
2 person and made those charges.

3 Q When you say name names, did she generally name  
4 names of people or entities to prosecute or not to prosecute?

5                   A     No, neither. She named Ukrainians who were  
6     standing in the way of reform of the judiciary in particular.

7 Q I want to show you a -- what's been marked as  
8 Exhibit 1, which is a May 9th, New York Times article.

9 [Taylor Exhibit No. 1]

10 Was marked for identification.]

11 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

12 Q You just testified a second ago that you were aware  
13 of efforts by Mr. Giuliani to go to Ukraine to push for  
14 investigations. Do you recognize this article?

15 A I do.

16 Q Okay. Was this what you were referring to?

17 A It was.

18 Q All right. And if you could just read for us the  
19 highlighted paragraph, the second paragraph?

20                   A     Mr. Giuliani said he plans to travel to Kyiv, the  
21                   Ukrainian capital, in the coming days and wants to meet with  
22                   the nation's President-elect to urge him to pursue inquiries  
23                   that allies of the White House contend could yield new  
24                   information about two matters of intense interest to Mr.  
25                   Trump.

1           Q     Continue, please.

2           A     One is the origin of the Special Counsel's  
3     investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016  
4     election. The other is the involvement of former Vice  
5     President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.'s son and a gas company owned  
6     by a Ukrainian oligarch.

7           Q     And then if you could read the quotation from Mr.  
8     Giuliani, two paragraphs down?

9           A     We're not meddling in an election, we're meddling  
10    in an investigation, which we have a right to do, Mr.  
11    Giuliani said.

12          Q     All right. And then if you go to the next page and  
13    just read the two lines that are highlighted?

14          A     He said that his efforts in Ukraine have the full  
15    support of Mr. Trump. He declined to say specifically  
16    whether he had briefed him on the planned meeting with  
17    Mr. Zelensky but added he basically knows what I'm doing,  
18    sure, as his lawyer.

19          Q     And then if you could go to the last page and the  
20    last line and just read that.

21          A     My only client is the President of the United  
22    States, he said. He's the one I have an obligation to report  
23    to, tell him what happened.

24          Q     So this article is dated May 9th, which as I  
25    understand it was during the period that you were considering

1           whether or not to return to Kyiv?

2           A    That's correct.

3           Q    Okay. And what was your reaction to seeing this  
4           article?

5           A    This was one of the several concerns I had when --  
6           considering whether to accept the offer to go back out to  
7           Kyiv. This was part of the -- one of the two snake pits,  
8           this is the Washington snake pit that I was concerned I would  
9           be stepping into if I were to accept the offer. So this made  
10           me less interested, this made me concerned, it troubled me  
11           that this is what was affecting U.S. policy towards Ukraine.

12           Q    Did you have any conversations with anyone, any  
13           executives or senior officials at the State Department about  
14           your multifaceted concerns?

15           A    I did. I had a conversation with the Counselor  
16           Ulrich Brechbuhl and then a conversation with Secretary  
17           Pompeo. And they were -- they were similar in both -- in  
18           both meetings I let them know up front going into the meeting  
19           that I had not decided whether to accept the offer to go back  
20           out to Kyiv because I was troubled by what I was hearing, not  
21           just this Giuliani article, but I was troubled by other  
22           things as well and I made this clear to both, both Mr.  
23           Brechbuhl and Secretary Pompeo.

24           And the concern was that the strong support, the policy  
25           of strong support for Ukraine, that as I said in my

1 statement, bipartisan, House, Senate, Republicans, Democrats  
2 administrations Republicans, Democrats all the way through,  
3 that strong support I was worried could change. And if it  
4 did change, I told them both, I couldn't serve. The counsel,  
5 I mentioned that I'd consulted with a mentor, and he said,  
6 Bill, if your country asks you to do something you could do  
7 it, if you can be effective. And the if you can be effective  
8 clause is really important.

9 And I could not be effective if our strong support for  
10 Ukraine policy were to change and if we were -- if for some  
11 reason, I couldn't imagine this would happen, but I was  
12 worried that there could be some dramatic change where we  
13 would agree with the Russians, that well maybe Crimea is  
14 Russian after all, you know, or something like that. And if  
15 that were to happen, and I made this clear to the Secretary  
16 and others in the room, I would have to come back, I would  
17 have to resign, I would have to leave post.

18 Q And what did Secretary Pompeo say in response to  
19 your expression of these concerns?

20 A He said that he supported the strong U.S. policy  
21 and that he would continue to support that strong U.S.  
22 policy, and that he would make this case to President Trump.

23 Q What, if anything, did he say about the snake pit  
24 in Washington that you described?

25 A He said that I should, as the Ambassador, as the

1 Charge out there, that I should follow the guidance and  
2 pursue the foreign policy of the U.S. -- of the  
3 administration, of the government, well established. And he  
4 said, and that policy is strong support, economic support,  
5 military support, political support, Democratic support  
6 and -- and that he would do his best to keep that strong  
7 support.

8 Q Did he in any way mention Mr. Giuliani?

9 A He didn't.

10 Q What did Counselor Brechbuhl say to you in response  
11 to these concerns?

12 A Same thing. Well, he said you need to -- I saw him  
13 about 3 days, the Thursday before the Monday meeting with  
14 Secretary Pompeo, he said, you'll have an opportunity to ask  
15 the Secretary about that.

16 Q What was Mr. Brechbuhl's view, personally?

17 A He agreed, he's is not directly in the Ukraine  
18 policymaking channel. He was more in the executive  
19 personnel, which is why I was having my -- an interview with  
20 him, a meeting with him before seeing the Secretary.

21 Q Did you specifically mention Mr. Giuliani to either  
22 Counselor Brechbuhl or Secretary Pompeo?

23 A Mr. Goldman, I don't remember if I did, I don't  
24 remember if I did or not.

25 Q Okay.

1           A    Not that I remember.

2           Q    What ultimately led you to take the job?

3           A    The Secretary's assurance that he would continue  
4           that strong support and that he would continue to push that  
5           strong support within the government. And frankly one of my  
6           concerns had been that there had not been a letter to  
7           President Zelensky congratulating him on his victory. And  
8           Secretary Pompeo looked over at Counselor Brechbuhl and said,  
9           what, no letter? And within 48 hours there was a letter.  
10          Now -- and it was a good letter -- it's the letter I  
11          mentioned in my statement that congratulated President  
12          Zelensky and invited him to a meeting in Washington.

13          Q    Okay. That was the May 29th letter that you  
14          referenced?

15          A    Correct, correct. That's right, because I saw  
16          Secretary Pompeo on the 28th.

17          Q    By the time you had seen Secretary Pompeo, were you  
18          aware that there was a meeting related to Ukraine with the  
19          President in the Oval Office on May 23rd?

20          A    Yes. I think I had heard that. I know I've heard  
21          about that -- I have -- I've gotten reports of that meeting.  
22          This was the --this is the meeting of the delegation that  
23          went -- the U.S. delegation that went to the inauguration in  
24          Kyiv and they came back to brief President Trump, that's the  
25          one you're talking about.

1 Q Yes.

2 A Yeah. So your question is whether or not I knew of  
3 that meeting when I saw the Secretary on the 28th. I don't  
4 know when I heard -- I can't remember. I heard several  
5 reports of, descriptions of that May 23rd meeting, but they  
6 might -- may have come after my meeting with Secretary  
7 Pompeo.

8 Q Who did you get reports of that meeting from?

9 THE CHAIRMAN: If I could just interrupt. And I don't  
10 know all the Members so I apologize. Only members of three  
11 committees and their staff and committee staff are authorized  
12 to be present. If there is any Member here who is not a  
13 member of the three committees, they need to absent  
14 themselves.

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: So who did I hear from --

16 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

17 Q -- Yeah.

18 A -- about the May 23rd meeting, yes?

19 Q Right.

20 A I'm sure Kurt Volker -- I imagine -- we had several  
21 conversations about this, this is an important meeting. And  
22 okay -- and Ambassador Sondland, because it was at that  
23 meeting that Ambassador Sondland, Volker and Secretary of  
24 Energy Perry, Rick Perry were given some responsibilities by  
25 the President to work on Ukraine policy.

1           So I'm sure in answer your question, Mr. Goldman, I'm  
2   sure I heard it from Kurt and Gordon, Kurt Volker and Gordon  
3   Sondland.

4           Q    And in addition to the fact that the President had  
5   asked the three of them to work on Ukraine policy, did you  
6   learn anything else about the conversation at that meeting --

7           A    I --

8           Q    -- from either Ambassador Volker or Ambassador  
9   Sondland?

10          A    I did. So they described how enthusiastic they  
11   were coming back from Kyiv, from the inauguration, how  
12   enthusiastic they were about the new President, President  
13   Zelensky. And they described their attempts or their  
14   attempts to pass on this enthusiasm to President Trump.

15          President Trump, I think I mentioned in my statement,  
16   was sceptical of Ukraine in general, but -- of the new  
17   Ukrainian administration. And when Secretary Perry,  
18   Ambassador Volker, and Ambassador Sondland suggested that it  
19   would be a good idea for the two Presidents, President Trump  
20   and President Zelensky to get together in a meeting. This  
21   now is before the letter was signed. Right, but so the idea  
22   to get together for a meeting was a good idea so that  
23   President Trump could see himself, what they had seen when  
24   they were in Kyiv, and what they had seen in their meetings  
25   with President Zelensky.

1                   President Trump didn't agree, but what he did say was  
2 work with Rudy Giuliani, he told the three of them to work  
3 with Rudy Giuliani.

4                   Q     Did he say what he wanted them to work with Rudy  
5 Giuliani about from your readouts?

6                   A     No, not that I recall.

7                   Q     By this point you understood that in part based on  
8 that article, but you indicate in your opening statement  
9 other press statements, did you understand what Rudy Giuliani  
10 was pushing for in Ukraine?

11                  A     This article that we just talked about was probably  
12 the best description and it -- it may have been the only  
13 direct description of what Mr. Giuliani was interested in.

14                  Q     And were you familiar with Burisma or the Ukrainian  
15 role at all in the 2016 --

16                  A     I became familiar, but I -- I think at that time I  
17 was not. In the past several months since seeing this and  
18 hearing how it piped up I became more familiar with it so now  
19 I'm pretty familiar. At the time, it is hard to say, exactly  
20 what you knew at a particular time. I don't think so. I --  
21 I don't think I understood other than you know, that Giuliani  
22 was out doing some things along these lines that this was  
23 what he was after.

24                  Q     And what was your reaction to hearing that the  
25 President had directed the Ambassador to the European Union,

1       the Special Envoy to the Ukraine conflict, and the Secretary  
2       of Energy to take a role in Ukraine policy and to speak to  
3       his personal lawyer?

4           A     Actually, I wasn't disturbed by that. It's not  
5       unusual to ask people outside the government to play a role.  
6       In some sense Kurt Volker was kind of outside the government  
7       and he was playing a very important role. He kind of came  
8       into the government, a very important role in the  
9       negotiations. There have been examples, we've heard about  
10      them recently of other civilians doing work for the State  
11      Department. And as long as the people pulled in from the  
12      outside, consulted from the outside, giving advice or ideas  
13      on policy, that's -- we see that all the time. We all have  
14      seen that, and that's okay, as long as it's consistent with  
15      and supports the main thrust of U.S. foreign policy.

16           And so at the time I didn't think that that was a  
17      problem.

18           Q     Over time, did your view of that change?

19           A     It did.

20           Q     And we'll get into that a little bit later. Did  
21      you come to understand whether any of those three individuals  
22      spoke to Mr. Giuliani after the President directed them to do  
23      so on May 23rd?

24           A     I know Kurt, Ambassador Volker, spoke to him on the  
25      phone a couple of times, I think had a breakfast with him

1       during the summer. And as we know, put Rudy Giuliani in  
2       touch with Andrey Yermak, the assistant to President  
3       Zelensky.

4           So I know that Ambassador Volker had some -- did follow  
5       up. And I'm pretty sure that Ambassador Sondland had some  
6       contact with Rudy Giuliani as well.

7           Q      And what about Secretary Perry?

8           A      I don't know. I've had almost no dealings -- let  
9       me see if it's even -- no dealings with Secretary Perry.

10          Q      You testified that you returned to Kyiv on June  
11       17th?

12          A      Yes.

13          Q      And you described in your opening remarks a phone  
14       conversation that you had 10 days later on June 27th with  
15       Ambassador Sondland about Ukraine matters. Do you recall  
16       anything more about that phone conversation with Ambassador  
17       Sondland?

18          A      This phone call, Mr. Goldman, was in preparation  
19       for a larger phone call the following day on June 28th. And  
20       I can -- I'd be happy to check my notes on anything else.  
21       When preparing this statement, I did check my notes and, as I  
22       said in my statement, Ambassador Sondland told me during a  
23       phone conversations President Zelensky, needed to make clear  
24       to President Trump that he, President Zelensky, was not  
25       standing in the way of investigations, there could have been

1 other parts of the conversation. That was the one piece that  
2 stuck out -- sticks out to me that I included here.

3 Q And did you know at that time what  
4 investigations Ambassador Sondland was referring to?

5 A I did not. I didn't, you know, I knew that these  
6 were -- that Mr. Giuliani was pursuing some investigations  
7 and I hadn't -- again, this was 10 days after arriving there  
8 I hadn't put this together. So no I wasn't sure what he was  
9 talking about, nor was I sure the next day, in this larger  
10 phone call, what people were referring to when they talked  
11 about investigations.

12 Q And I believe you testified in your opening  
13 statement that the call the next day there was a reference to  
14 investigations to, quote, "Get to the bottom of things."  
15 unquote.

16 A That's correct. And that was -- Ambassador Volker  
17 intended to say to President Zelensky when Ambassador Volker  
18 sat down with President Zelensky in Toronto at an assistance  
19 conference, at a reform conference that was coming up the  
20 following week. And yes, it was -- and again, from my notes  
21 in preparing this -- from my notes preparing this, this  
22 actually was in the little spiral notebook by my desk in the  
23 office where I had that meeting -- had that phone call is  
24 where I have that quote.

25 Q Was the reference to investigations by Ambassador

1       Sondland on June 27th the earliest date or time that you can  
2       recall any discussion of investigations?

3           A       And again, before I came out there, we'd had some  
4       conversations -- I'm sure that I had conversation with Deputy  
5       Assistant Secretary Kent about the Giuliani role, which made  
6       me concerned and the role was an investigation so I wanted to  
7       be careful about how I answer your question.

8           When I got out there in the first 10 days -- let me see,  
9       I did have a meeting -- I had a phone call the day after I  
10      got there, which was on -- I got there on the 17th. And on  
11      the 18th we had a phone call -- yeah, but it was about -- it  
12      was about the meeting, it was about the meeting that the  
13      Ukrainians wanted with -- that President Zelensky wanted with  
14      President Trump. And I don't recall any discussion on that  
15      day, on the 18th, which is again the day after I arrived of  
16      investigations and I show nothing else in my notes about  
17      that. So I think that's the answer.

18           Q       Okay. And you do reference specifically in your  
19      opening remarks that President Zelensky needed to make it  
20      clear to President Trump that he was not standing in the way  
21      of investigations. And that was a preview to the call that  
22      you had with President Zelensky the day after?

23           A       Right. On June 27th, correct.

24           Q       And do you recall whether or not that message was  
25      conveyed to President Zelensky on the call on the 28th?

1           A    It was not.  And -- and Ambassador Volker intended  
2 to pass that message in Toronto several days later.

3           Q    Okay.  And did you speak to Ambassador Volker after  
4 he went to Toronto in early July?

5           A    Many times.  But about that?

6           Q    Specifically about a conversation that he had with  
7 President Zelensky?

8           A    Yes.

9           Q    And what did he tell you about that conversation?

10          A    He said that he had been in a broader conversation,  
11 a larger conversation with many officials on both sides.  And  
12 then he had an opportunity to have a smaller conversation  
13 with President Zelensky and President Zelensky's Chief of  
14 Staff, Andriy Bohdan, where Kurt said that he had -- Kurt  
15 told me that he had discussed how President Zelensky could  
16 prepare for the phone call with President Trump.  And without  
17 going into -- without providing me any details about the  
18 specific words, did talk about investigations in that  
19 conversation with -- in Toronto with Zelensky and Bohdan.

20          Q    In what context did he tell you that he spoke about  
21 investigations?

22          A    So when did he tell me --

23          Q    No, in what context did the issue or topic of  
24 investigations come up?  Was it in connection with an  
25 interaction between President Zelensky and President Trump?

1           A     Yes, it was specifically in preparation for the  
2     phone call and Kurt suggested to President Zelensky that  
3     President Trump would like to hear about the investigations.

4           Q     Okay. And at that point did you know what  
5     investigations he was talking about?

6           A     No.

7           Q     It was -- it was just described as investigations?

8           A     Correct.

9           Q     Understood. You just --

10           THE CHAIRMAN: Is there anything more you could tell us  
11     about that conversation when he -- when Ambassador Volker  
12     said that he discussed investigations with Zelensky's Chief  
13     of Staff. Did you ask him what about that, what are you  
14     talking about, you were aware at that time of what Giuliani  
15     had said, did it come up in that conversation?

16           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, the conversation I had  
17     with Ambassador Volker about that -- about the Toronto  
18     conversation took place probably -- let's see, so it was --  
19     July 2nd was the Toronto conversation. Kurt arrived, he and  
20     I talked a lot, and he also visited a couple of times in this  
21     timeframe. And it was during those conversations and visits  
22     that we had this conversation. So nothing specific came out  
23     of those conversations describing this.

24           THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

25           BY MR. GOLDMAN:

1           Q     On July 10th you testified that you had a meeting  
2     in Kyiv with President Zelensky's Chief of Staff Andriy  
3     Bohdan who had indicated to you that he had heard from Mr.  
4     Giuliani that the phone call between the two Presidents was  
5     unlikely to happen and that they I think you said were  
6     alarmed and disappointed. Oh, and the meeting also was the  
7     Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko?

8           A     Yeah.

9           Q     Did they indicate to you who had heard from Mr.  
10     Giuliani and how that message had been relayed?

11          A     You know, I was going over my notes last night.  
12     Yes, it was relayed through the then prosecutor general, this  
13     fellow I mentioned earlier, Lutsenko and it was -- and as we  
14     know, Giuliani and Lutsenko talked a lot. And so Prystaiko  
15     and Bohdan had heard from Giuliani through Lutsenko.

16          Q     What do you know about Mr. Lutsenko?

17          A     When I was in Kyiv 2006 to 2009, Yuriy Lutsenko was  
18     the Minister of Interior so he headed up all the police. And  
19     frankly he did a pretty good job at the time. He was a  
20     controversial choice for President Poroshenko as the  
21     Prosecutor General because he -- he had law enforcement with  
22     police but had no legal training. So he was an unusual  
23     choice.

24           Mr. Lutsenko was loyal to President Poroshenko and so  
25     kept his job there. But was a very kind of a person who

1       listened carefully to what was going on in Washington, what  
2       was going on in Kyiv, the politics. He wanted to stay in the  
3       job and of course this is 2016 when he is the Prosecutor  
4       General and no one knows about the outcome of the election.  
5       So I mean a lot of Ukrainians, probably a lot of  
6       internationals around the world were trying to figure out  
7       American politics at the time, but Lutsenko was also tuned  
8       into those.

9           Q       But clearly the senior officials for President  
10       Zelensky were interested in anything that Mr. Giuliani had to  
11       say. Is that accurate?

12          A       That's accurate, because they understood, as did  
13       Kurt and -- Ambassador Volker and Ambassador Sondland, that  
14       at President Trump's direction, Rudy Giuliani was  
15       influential, was influential with that team. And they were  
16       sure, and I think Lutsenko had the same view that in order to  
17       have this meeting, get this meeting between the two  
18       Presidents that Mr. Giuliani was going to be an important  
19       player.

20          Q       Did they understand why Mr. Giuliani had indicated  
21       that there would -- the phone call was unlikely to happen?

22          A       I don't know.

23          Q       Okay. And you said that you relayed these concerns  
24       to Counselor Brechbuhl?

25          A       I did.

1 Q And what did he say to you?

2 A He -- first he'd heard -- I was hoping I could find  
3 out something from Washington that indicated whether or not  
4 this phone call was going to happen and he didn't know.

5 Q Did he get back to you?

6 A No.

7 Q You describe a phone conversation that you had with  
8 Fiona Hill and Alex Vindman on July 19th at some length in  
9 your opening statement.

10 A Yes.

11 Q And you refer back to a meeting that occurred on  
12 July 10th, while you were in Kyiv, so you were not there. Is  
13 that right?

14 A That's correct.

15 Q And based on the phone -- well, let me ask this,  
16 did you hear about that meeting from anyone other than Dr.  
17 Hill and Mr. Vindman on the 19th?

18 A Yes. Let's see, so at that meeting -- that meeting  
19 included Mr. Danyliuk, as well as Mr. Yermak. And I think  
20 Ambassador Sondland, and it might have been Secretary Perry,  
21 and of course Ambassador Bolton were in that meeting. I will  
22 find that there -- yeah. Yes.

23 So, Oleksandr Danyliuk is the National Security Advisor  
24 so he is Ambassador Bolton's counterpart. And they had a  
25 good meeting there. So your question was had -- did I hear

1       from other people? The answer is certainly yes, again with  
2       -- back and forth with Kurt Volker so at least those three  
3       recounting of that meeting.

4           Q     Did you have any discussions with any Ukrainian  
5       officials about that meeting?

6           A     Yes. When are -- when Oleksandr Danyliuk got back  
7       I'm sure we had conversations about it. I had also had set  
8       him up again as the National Security Advisor for Ukraine. I  
9       also set him up to see in Washington Steve Hadley who had of  
10       course had that job earlier, and they had a good meeting as  
11       well.

12           So I did have a conversation with Danyliuk when he got  
13       back about with meetings with Hadley and -- but not in great  
14       detail about the meeting with Ambassador Bolton and team.

15           Q     Okay. So you outlined in some detail what Dr. Hill  
16       and Mr. Vindman describe to you about that meeting. Is there  
17       anything else that you recall that they said about that  
18       meeting that comes to mind?

19           A     No.

20           Q     What was your reaction when you heard their  
21       description of how Ambassador Sondland had connected  
22       investigations with the Oval Office meeting and that  
23       Ambassador Bolton had directed Dr. Hill to brief the lawyers  
24       and Ambassador Bolton's reference to a drug deal? What was  
25       your reaction?

1           A     My reaction was that the opportunity for Oleksandr  
2     Danyliuk and John Bolton to have a good conversation was  
3     important for Danyliuk. For him to understand how NSCs work,  
4     number one. And two, what the substantive policy issues in  
5     particular the war in the East, and energy security, probably  
6     economic reform, the substance -- and they apparently were  
7     having a good conversation Bolton and Danyliuk were having a  
8     good conversation along these lines.

9                 Maybe toward the end, but certainly after they'd had  
10    part of that -- a good amount of that conversation,  
11    programmatic conversation, substantive conversation, what I  
12    call the regular channel conversation, Fiona Hill and Alex  
13    Vindman describe how Ambassador Sondland in that meeting with  
14    John Bolton mentioned investigations.

15                And John Bolton understood what the reference was and  
16    walked out of the meeting, ended the meeting abruptly. Not  
17    wanting to have that kind of -- he understood, more than I, I  
18    guess at the time, that this was -- this could lead to  
19    interference in U.S.- political life and he wanted nothing of  
20    it.

21           Q     And that was the description that you had received  
22    from Dr. Hill and Lieutenant Colonel Vindman?

23           A     That's correct.

24           Q     So at this point then did you have a better  
25    understanding as to what these investigations were that

1       President Trump and Rudy Giuliani wanted in connection with  
2       an Oval Office meeting?

3           A     So this is getting into July -- this is, yeah, July  
4       10th -- yes, I'm beginning to understand that there -- that  
5       the investigations, again I'm not sure if there's a crystal  
6       time, a specific time, but I'm beginning to understand that  
7       these investigations of Burisma and the 2016 elections are  
8       what the term investigations refer to.

9           Q     And what did you know about the Burisma  
10      investigation?

11          A     So Burisma, a London based company that -- energy  
12      company that invests a lot and has dealings in Ukraine, in I  
13      think mainly -- it's in energy, I'm not sure if it's got gas  
14      -- had Hunter Biden on its board at an earlier time, maybe  
15      back in 2016. I am not an expert on this but this is you  
16      asked what I know, this is what I know.

17           This of course is the time that Vice President Biden was  
18      pushing the Ukrainians very hard on corruption and the  
19      allegation -- you know the allegation. The allegation is  
20      that the Vice President wanted to get a Prosecutor General  
21      fired in order, the allegation was, to stop the investigation  
22      of the Burisma -- the Burisma was a bit of a shady  
23      organization I'm told. Again, I'm not an expert on this.  
24      But it had been accused of money laundering and those kinds  
25      of things so there were some investigations of it. I think

1       they may have been closed, the investigation may have been  
2       closed under one or the other of the Prosecutors General in  
3       the previous time.

4 Q Did you understand whether the investigation  
5 desired by Mr. Giuliani related to Burisma was connected to  
6 the Bidens role in Ukraine and that company in particular?

7           A     It became clear to me with press reports or other  
8     discussions, but that emerged, yes.

9                   Q        Okay. I want to give you what we've marked as  
10                   Exhibit 2, which is a stack of the WhatsApp messages that  
11                   Mr. Volker had provided to us.

12 [Taylor Exhibit No. 2]

13 Was marked for identification.]

14

15 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

16 Q And I would ask you to go to 37, page 37, if you  
17 could. And if you go to 7/21 at 1:45 a.m., which is Eastern  
18 time.

19 A 7/21.

20 Q 1:45:54 a.m., right sort of in the middle page. Do  
21 you see it?

22 A Yes, yes.

23 Q And if you could read. This is a text from you on  
24 a chain with Gordon Sondland and Kurt Volker and you're  
25 writing here can you read it?

1           A     And I'm writing, right -- Gordon, one thing Kurt  
2     and I talked about yesterday was Sasha Danyliuk's point that  
3     President Zelensky is sensitive about Ukraine being taken  
4     seriously, not merely as an instrument in Washington domestic  
5     reelection politics.

6           Q     Okay. And when you had that conversation with  
7     Mr. Danyliuk, what did you understand him to be referring to,  
8     when you say Washington domestic reelection politics?

9           A     I'm sure that was a reference to the investigations  
10    that Mr. Giuliani wanted to pursue.

11          Q     What was your view of the potential telephone call  
12    between President Zelensky and President Trump?

13          A     Initially, as I said in late like June when I first  
14    arrived, this sounded like a good idea. A good idea to have  
15    the two Presidents talk. In particular if President Trump  
16    were skeptical about Ukraine in general and President  
17    Zelensky in particular, I thought that would be a good idea.

18          President Zelensky is a smart man, a good politician. I  
19    would even say charming and he could have a good conversation  
20    with President Trump so I thought it was a good idea to have  
21    that.

22          As the month of July went on and some of these suggest  
23    this, I was less convinced. I became less convinced that  
24    that meeting was worth what Giuliani was asking. Yes, it  
25    would be fine to have the two Presidents talk, but if

1 President Zelensky, in order to get that meeting were going  
2 to have to intervene in U.S. domestic policy or politics by  
3 investigated -- by announcing an investigation that would  
4 benefit someone in the United States, then it's not -- it  
5 wasn't clear to me that that would be worth it. That the  
6 meeting would be worth it.

7 Q Ambassador Sondland then responds to your text 3  
8 hours later. Can you read what he reads?

9 A Yes, he writes, absolutely. But we need to get the  
10 conversation started and the relationship built irrespective  
11 of the pretext. I am worried about the alternative.

12 Q What did you understand him to mean by the pretext?

13 A I thought about -- I'm not sure I understood, but  
14 my -- my guess looking back on it is the pretext for the  
15 phone call, that is Gordon wanted -- he thought that the  
16 phone call would be a good idea and wanted it to happen. And  
17 if the discussion of the investigations was what it took,  
18 then it's -- this suggests that that's what he had in mind.

19 Q And when he says, I'm worried about the  
20 alternative. What did you understand --

21 A I guess -- again, I'm not sure what is in Gordon's  
22 mind, but I guess he was worried that if they didn't have the  
23 meeting it would not be good for the relationship between the  
24 two countries.

25 Q And is this in reference to the meeting or the

1 phone call?

2 A Phone call. I'm sorry, phone call.

3 Q And that was what was at stake at this point?

4 A It was at stake at this point. And the idea was  
5 that the phone call would be a step toward the meeting.

6 Q All right. Now this is 2 months after -- almost  
7 2 months after the letter inviting President Zelensky to the  
8 White House. Is that right?

9 A That's correct. The letter from -- it was May 29th  
10 and this is July 21st.

11 Q And as the Charge de mission, you're meeting with a  
12 number of Ukrainian officials, did you get the sense of  
13 whether or not they were getting a little worried or nervous  
14 or what was their reaction to the delay in time?

15 A Yes, they were eager for this meeting. They wanted  
16 the meeting. They wanted the invitation to the White House.  
17 And when it was suggested that a phone call would be a good  
18 step toward that, they were willing to do that. But in  
19 answer to your question, they were very eager to have this  
20 meeting. That was high on their list.

21 Q Why were they so eager?

22 A A meeting -- people in this room will know as well  
23 as I, a meeting with the head of state with a U.S. President  
24 in the Oval Office suggests a relationship. It suggests a  
25 relationship between the two countries that the Ukrainians

1       wanted. The Ukrainians value, valued and they value a  
2       relationship with the United States as their main strategic  
3       partner, as their mainstream partner.

4           So a meeting with President Trump or any President for  
5       that matter, but President Trump in the Oval Office doesn't  
6       happen regularly -- doesn't happen to very many heads of  
7       state. And if you get that, you can be sure or you can think  
8       or people might be able to believe that you've got a good  
9       relationship between the two countries and I think that's  
10      what they were looking for.

11       Q       If I could direct your attention to page 42 now.  
12       On July 22nd, near the top at 4:27. This is a text exchange  
13       between Kurt Volker and Gordon Sondland. You are not on  
14       this. Volker writes to Sondland, orchestrated a great phone  
15       call with Rudy and Yermak. They are going to get together  
16       when Rudy goes to Madrid in a couple of weeks. In the  
17       meantime Rudy is now advocating for a phone call. And Volker  
18       explains how he's also advocating for the phone call and then  
19       Gordon Sondland responds I talked to Tim Morrison, Fiona's  
20       replacement he is pushing, but feel free as well.

21       Volker had said, but I can tell Bolton and you can tell  
22       Mick that Rudy agrees on a call, if that happens. I assume  
23       that means Mick Mulvaney. Right?

24       A       Yes.

25       Q       Were you aware that Ambassador Volker had connected

1           Mr. Giuliani and Mr. Yermak?

2           A    Not at that point. I was made aware later.

3           Q    Do you recall when you were made aware?

4           A    No.

5           Q    Did you learn that they had a meeting in Madrid?

6           A    Later.

7           Q    After their meeting?

8           A    Well after.

9           Q    Well after their meeting?

10          A    Yeah.

11          Q    Okay. And then if we go to page 19 on 7/25 at 8:36  
12         in the morning. This is a text exchange between Volker and  
13         Yermak. Volker writes to Yermak, good lunch, thanks. Heard  
14         from White House. Assuming President Z convinces Trump he  
15         will investigate/ quote, "get to the bottom of what happened"  
16         unquote, in 2016, we will nail down date for visit to  
17         Washington. Good luck see you tomorrow. Kurt.

18          Have you seen this text before?

19          A    Yes. I think I've seen it in the paper.

20          Q    As part of this investigation?

21          A    Right, right. I wasn't on it.

22          Q    So you were not on this one?

23          A    Correct.

24          Q    But were you aware that this message, that Volker  
25         texted to Yermak, were you aware that that message was

1        relayed to the senior Ukrainian officials in advance of the  
2        phone call?

3            A        Yes. This is the basic message that Kurt -- that  
4        Ambassador Volker provided to President Zelensky and Bohdan  
5        in Toronto on the 2nd of July, it's very consistent.

6            Q        And is it your view that by this point the White  
7        House meeting between President Zelensky and President Trump  
8        was conditioned on the initiation of these investigations by  
9        Ukraine?

10          A        I am sure that happened based on all the things I  
11        said. So Mr. Goldman, you asked me did I know it at that  
12        point or on 7/25?

13          Q        Right.

14          A        The answer must be yes, yeah. I knew it in July it  
15        became clearer and clearer.

16          Q        Okay. And you did not -- you said it was I think  
17        somewhat strange that you did not get a readout of the July  
18        25th call. Is that right?

19          A        That's correct. It's a little strange, it's not a  
20        lot strange. We didn't get very many readouts, but --

21          Q        And I believe you were in Kyiv and so was  
22        Ambassador Volker and Sondland?

23          A        Correct.

24          Q        At this time?

25          A        That's correct.

1           Q     Did any Ukrainian official whether it was Zelensky  
2     or any of their senior officials say anything to you during  
3     their visit, perhaps at a dinner that you had with  
4     Mr. Danyliuk about these investigations, was that on their  
5     mind at that point?

6           A     We did have dinner with Gordon Sondland, and  
7     Danyliuk, and Kurt the night before the discussion -- so  
8     yeah, that -- the night before the discussion, so on the  
9     25th, yes. But the brief conversation that we had with  
10    Danyliuk about that was that they seemed to think that the  
11    call went fine, the call went well. He wasn't disturbed by  
12    anything. He wasn't disturbed that he told us about the  
13    phone call.

14           THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, our time has expired. It's  
15    my intention after the minority has their 1 hour to take a  
16    brief lunch break. Would you like a rest room break now  
17    before we begin?

18           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm fine, I'm fine. I appreciate  
19    the offer.

20           THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. 1 hour to the  
21    minority, sir.

22           BY MR. CASTOR:

23           Q     Thank you, Ambassador. Thank you for your service  
24    50 years of faithful service to the United States. We truly  
25    appreciate that. To the extent any of our questions here

1 today you belie that, let me just state at the outset we  
2 appreciate your service.

3 A Thank you, Mr. Castor.

4 Q I also want to express condolences to Mr. Cummings'  
5 staff, they rejoined us today, Susanne Grooms, Peter Kenny.  
6 Mr. Cummings treated his staff like family and his staff  
7 treated him like family as well. So they are hurting and we  
8 are glad they are back today.

9 You're here today under subpoena. Is that correct?

10 A Yes, sir.

11 Q Would we be able to have a copy of the subpoena?  
12 We've never seen it. A lot of these subpoenas -- some of  
13 them we have seen, others we have not.

14 MR. GOLDMAN: The HPSCI minority saw the subpoena before  
15 it was --

16 MR. CASTOR: Could we make it like an exhibit? Usually  
17 when a witness is appearing per subpoena, you make it an  
18 exhibit. Can we do that?

19 MR. GOLDMAN: We'll consider that and get back to you.

20 MR. CASTOR: So the answer is no?

21 MR. GOLDMAN: No, I said we'll consider that and get  
22 back to you.

23 MR. CASTOR: So -- okay.

24 BY MR. CASTOR:

25 Q When did you first learn the subpoena was coming?

1           A    This morning.

2           Q    Okay. What time?

3           A    8:30?  8:30.

4           Q    Was it your understanding all along that a subpoena  
5    was likely to --

6           A    I'd seen the pattern of other witnesses who were  
7    under the same instruction I was and presumably we were under  
8    the same constraint and that when they received the subpoena  
9    right before they appeared, so I was anticipating the same  
10   thing.

11          Q    And a handful of State Department officials have  
12    come in so far, Ambassador Yovanovitch, Deputy Assistant  
13   Secretary Kent, Ambassador McKinley. Although I don't think  
14   --

15          A    Ambassador Sondland.

16          Q    Ambassador Sondland. And they all had subpoenas,  
17   correct?

18          A    Correct, that's my understand.

19          Q    Not Ambassador McKinley. So the State Department  
20   is well aware of this pattern?

21          A    Very well aware.

22          Q    Okay. You mentioned the circumstances. If the  
23   circumstances changed, you believe you would be allowed to  
24   testify pursuant to the subpoena. They weren't ordering you  
25   not to appear over the subpoena, were they?

1           A     No.

2           Q     Okay. Did anyone at the State Department reach out  
3     to you either in H or L when it became a foregone conclusion  
4     that these subpoenas are coming? Did anybody reach out to  
5     you to communicate that should a subpoena be issued, you  
6     should not testify?

7           A     Can I ask counsel to answer that, because they had  
8     interaction with the State Department lawyers.

9           MR. CASTOR: Okay.

10          MR. BELLINGER: After his initial conversations with H,  
11     then all further conversations were from the L lawyer to me.  
12     They sent us the directive that said that he should not  
13     appear under I think the quote is under the present  
14     circumstances. We told the majority that we could not  
15     appear; he'd been instructed not to. We saw the pattern.

16          The L said to us, if you get a subpoena, we're not  
17     prohibiting you from appearing, but if you do appear,  
18     ultimately under a subpoena then you have to protect  
19     classified information and other information. So that was  
20     the back and forth with the lawyers at the State Department.

21          MR. CASTOR: Okay, thank you.

22           BY MR. CASTOR:

23          Q     I apologize for asking you some of these details a  
24     lot of those, on the Republican side of things, we're in the  
25     dark about many of these blow by blow when the subpoena, is

1       the subpoena going to go. And that leads to mistrust. Some  
2       of the other machinations about you can't -- we can't have  
3       copies of the transcript, we're only allowed two staffers in  
4       the room from the Oversight Committee, leads to questions of  
5       this sort. So that's why I ask. So I appreciate that.

6           You mentioned that the company Burisma was a bit of a  
7       shady organization?

8           A       Mr. Castor, I don't want to say more than I know.  
9       And again, as I mentioned to Mr. Goldman, I learned about  
10      Burisma -- I don't think I knew about Burisma before spring,  
11      before this past spring when I was thinking about coming back  
12      out to Kyiv. So what I know about Burisma is recent and you  
13      and I have probably read the same thing.

14           Q       Okay. So you're aware that after you left your  
15      first tour as Ambassador, I think it's in 2014 this former  
16      ecology minister Zlochevsky, it's alleged that he improperly  
17      obtained certain licenses.

18           A       I've heard that.

19           Q       Okay. And there are a number of allegations  
20      surrounding the company since 2014 relating Zlochevsky,  
21      you're familiar with those?

22           A       Not in any detail.

23           Q       Do you have any reason to dispute that these things  
24      occurred?

25           A       I have no reason.

1           Q     When you arrived at the embassy did your staff  
2     brief you about about some of the oligarchs and the  
3     environment of corruption?

4           A     In general certainly. I don't recall a specific  
5     briefing on Burisma.

6           Q     Okay. Was the name everybody mentioned in any of  
7     those briefings?

8           A     It has certainly been mentioned since, you know,  
9     and over the past couple of months when it has shown up in  
10    the papers.

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1 [11:53 a.m.]

2 BY MR. CASTOR:

3 Q And what can you tell us about other oligarchs  
4 that might allegedly be involved with corruption in Ukraine?

5 A A general question, okay.

6 Q Is it an issue?

7 A It's a big issue. It's a big issue. And it's  
8 particularly a big issue today with this new administration.  
9 The one problem, the one concern, the one issue that we have,  
10 the U.S. Government and the international community more  
11 broadly, with this administration, with the Zelensky  
12 administration, is the influence of oligarchs.

13 Now, the influence of one particular oligarch over Mr.  
14 Zelensky is of particular concern, and that's this fellow  
15 Kolomoisky, so -- and Kolomoisky has growing influence. And  
16 this is one of the concerns that I have expressed to  
17 President Zelensky and his team on several occasions very  
18 explicitly, saying that, you know, Mr. President, Kolomoisky  
19 was not elected. You were elected and he, Mr. Kolomoisky, is  
20 increasing his influence in your government, which could  
21 cause you to fail. So I've had that conversation with him a  
22 couple of times.

23 Q And you're aware from -- at various points in time  
24 some of these oligarchs, some of these companies have been under  
25 investigation?

1           A    Yes.

2           Q    For various reasons?

3           A    Yes.

4           Q    We understand Burisma, from additional witness  
5        testimony, has been -- either Burisma or Zlochevsky has been  
6        under investigation for money laundering, for tax evasion,  
7        among other things. And you're familiar with that generally?

8           A    I am familiar with that generally.

9           Q    What can you say about the integrity of the  
10      criminal justice system in Ukraine?

11         A    Flawed.

12         Q    So is it fair to say that if some of these  
13      companies, some of these oligarchs had been under  
14      investigation at some point in time that the investigation  
15      may have been closed for improper purposes?

16         A    Yes. It could have been closed for payments, yes.

17         Q    So, inherently, the interest of somebody in the  
18      United States of wanting to -- wanting Ukraine to get to the  
19      bottom of corruption is not a problem, right?

20         A    We have long made it, over -- certainly while I was  
21      there in 2006-2009 and subsequently, have long made it clear  
22      to the Ukrainian Governments over time that their ability to  
23      integrate into Europe and succeed in that goal was challenged  
24      by, was threatened by, a lack of credible rule of law, which  
25      included courts, investigations.

1           So yes, that's been a constant theme of U.S. policy  
2 towards Ukraine.

3           Q     Okay. So, to the extent somebody in the United  
4 States, whether it be at the State Department or the National  
5 Security Council or even the White House, has questions about  
6 whether investigations were properly closed and ought to be  
7 reopened is something that is a product of the environment,  
8 correct?

9           A     We look very carefully at the operation and the  
10 implementation of the justice system in Ukraine, again,  
11 because of its importance for investment, because of its  
12 importance for trust in the government, because of the  
13 importance of having confidence that an objective rule of law  
14 system, a judiciary system, was so important for it.

15           So that, in general -- now, you know -- yeah, that, in  
16 general, has been our policy.

17           Q     But if Zlochevsky or Burisma is under investigation  
18 for money laundering, tax evasion, and those cases are  
19 closed, as you suggest, because they were paid off, the  
20 prosecutors were paid off, then certainly it's okay to want  
21 those cases to be reopened?

22           A     The policy that I've been aware of has been a  
23 general policy of the importance of honest judges, of the  
24 selection process for judges, the selection process for  
25 prosecutors, the institutions. It has been less a focus on

1       individual cases. Individual cases, in my view, is not what  
2       U.S. -- what U.S. foreign policy. What we need to press on  
3       is strengthening the institutions in Ukraine, but in other  
4       countries as well, so that the population, the society has  
5       confidence in it. So it's more the institution than the  
6       specific case.

7           Q       Are you aware of the effort of Burisma in 2014 to,  
8       you know, assemble a high-profile board of directors?

9           A       So 2014, I was not paying great attention to that  
10      aspect. So what I know, probably what we all know is that  
11      they put some very high-profile people on their board.  
12      Again, I've only come to know that over the past couple of  
13      months because of all the attention. So I know this -- I  
14      didn't know it in 2014 because I was at the Institute of  
15      Peace trying to do Iraq or Afghanistan, whatever.

16           Q       And one of the folks they put on the board was  
17      Hunter Biden, right?

18           A       That's my understanding.

19           Q       Do you know if he has any experience in corporate  
20      governance?

21           A       I don't know. I don't know Hunter Biden. I don't  
22      know what he --

23           Q       Do you think it's possible that he was tapped for  
24      the board because his dad was the Vice President?

25           A       So, Mr. Castor, I'm here as a fact witness. I

1       don't have any facts on that. I don't have an opinion on  
2       that, and you don't want me -- my --

3           Q     But a reasonable person could say there are  
4       perceived conflicts of interest there, right?

5           A     Sure.

6           Q     In your time as Ambassador, the first stint '06 to  
7       '09 and then again, have any -- has anyone asked the Embassy  
8       whether you had an issue about putting certain officials on  
9       their board?

10          A     Recently, there have been questions about -- well,  
11       recently there have been questions about boards of Naftogaz.  
12       So the answer is yes, in that case.

13           Another set of issues are the corporate boards of the  
14       state-owned banks. And decisions about who is appointed to  
15       the state-owned bank boards has been an issue for the -- for  
16       the independence of the National Bank of Ukraine, the NBU, in  
17       conflict with the administration.

18           So the short answer is yes, the board membership has  
19       been an issue that we've paid some attention to.

20          Q     Okay. And what's the Embassy's ordinary posture  
21       when it comes to that?

22          A     The --

23          Q     Do you --

24          A     The selection process -- so what -- again, the  
25       examples I just gave you, the Naftogaz and the state-owned

1       banks, our policy on those, being -- both being state-owned,  
2       all of those being state-owned banks and Naftogaz, the  
3       selection process, open, competitive, transparent.

4           I don't know that that -- I don't remember seeing any  
5       specific of privately owned companies that -- or the boards  
6       on privately owned companies. So the interest in board  
7       membership is of -- that I'm familiar with is state-owned  
8       companies, the ones I've mentioned.

9           [Discussion off the record.]

10          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, it's actually -- the open  
11       competition is for contracts as well as an open competitive  
12       selection process for board members.

13           BY MR. CASTOR:

14          Q       You mentioned in your opener that you're on the  
15       board of a small Ukrainian --

16          A       I was. I'm not on, but I was, yeah. It's called  
17       the East Europe Foundation. Yeah.

18          Q       Okay. Any other board memberships for you?

19          A       I was, again, on the board of the American  
20       Councils, both nongovernmental organizations here in  
21       Washington.

22          Q       Okay. Any of these boards pay you \$50,000 a month  
23       for your service?

24          A       No. They pay nothing.

25          MR. CASTOR: I want to mark as exhibit 3 a Politico

1 article from January.

2 [Minority Exhibit No. 3]

3 was marked for identification.]

9 BY MR. CASTOR:

10 Q This is a Politico article dated January 2017. Can  
11 you identify the article -- or the author for the record?

12 A Mr. Castor, I don't know the two authors.

13 Q Yes, could you just say their name?

14 A Oh, sorry. Kenneth Vogel and David Stern.

15 Q Going back to exhibit 1, the New York Times story.

16 A Yes.

17 Q Who wrote that one?

18 A Kenneth Vogel.

19 Q Would you mind reading the highlighted paragraph?

20                   A     "Ukrainian Government officials tried to help  
21     Hillary Clinton and undermine Trump by publicly questioning  
22     his fitness for office. They also disseminated documents  
23     implicating a top Trump aide in corruption and suggested that  
24     they were investigating the matter, only to back away after  
25     the election, and they helped Clinton's allies research

1       damaging information on Trump and his advisers, a Politico  
2       investigation found."

3           Q       Now, you weren't in the Ukraine in 2017. Had you  
4       been aware of any of these issues --

5           A       No.

6           Q       -- from your post at --

7           A       At the Institute, no.

8           Q       Are you aware of the allegation that a  
9       DNC-connected consultant was communicating with the Ukrainian  
10      Embassy here in D.C.?

11          A       I have recently heard that.

12          Q       And have you ever heard the name [REDACTED]

13        [REDACTED]?

14          A       Again, I think in that same connection where I've  
15       recently heard that issue that you -- the connection that you  
16       just described, I think that's the name. That's about the  
17       limit of my knowledge on that.

18          Q       Fair enough. When you arrived at post, did anybody  
19       give you briefings about --

20          A       They didn't.

21          Q       -- [REDACTED] or --

22          A       They didn't.

23          Q       -- efforts of the DNC to influence Ukrainians in  
24       the U.S.?

25          A       They didn't.

1           Q     Okay. So your sum total of knowledge of that comes  
2     from news accounts?

3           A     I think that's right. It's -- I think that's  
4     right. It's -- I could have also had a conversation with  
5     somebody about that, but that was also based on news  
6     accounts.

7           Q     Were you aware that the Ukrainian Ambassador to the  
8     U.S., Chaly, had entered the fray, the political fray, and  
9     wrote an op-ed in opposition to then-candidate Trump?

10          A     I was not aware.

11          Q     Is that ordinary or --

12          A     It's not. Ambassadors do not -- are not supposed  
13     to and should not interfere in or participate in domestic  
14     elections, the host country elections.

15          Q     Did anyone at the Embassy ever call to your  
16     attention the issue with Ambassador Chaly?

17          A     In this context, no. In other contexts, in  
18     particular the Zelensky administration, the new  
19     administration was looking to replace him as soon as they  
20     could once they came into office. This, of course, was this  
21     past summer.

22          Q     Okay. And is that common? Had Chaly served for a  
23     couple Presidents or was he linked to Poroshenko?

24          A     He -- I think he only served under Poroshenko. He  
25     was a professional Foreign Service officer, so he undoubtedly

1       had earlier in his career in other things, but in terms of  
2       that Ambassadorship.

3           Q     On page 11 of this story, there's a reference to a  
4       Ukrainian investigative journalist and, at the time, a  
5       Parliamentarian named Serhiy Leschenko. What do you know  
6       about Mr. Leschenko?

7           A     So Mr. Leschenko is a known reformer journalist  
8       who, in 2014, when the so-called Revolution of Dignity,  
9       decided to join the government -- well, run for office and  
10      was elected to the Rada, to the Parliament, where he  
11      continued to be associated with a group of reformers.

12           Q     And is he still in the Parliament?

13           A     Is he in the Parliament? I think he's not.

14           Q     Do you know if he's ever been investigated or  
15      prosecuted?

16           A     He has been. He has been investigated. Again,  
17      this is not my -- this is before I arrived.

18           Q     If you know.

19           A     Yeah. He has been investigated, and a court -- I  
20      don't remember which court -- dismissed the charge.

21           Q     Okay. Are you aware of the allegations relating to  
22      Leschenko and the Manafort ledgers?

23           A     Yes.

24           Q     And what do you know about that?

25           A     As I understand it, he was the one who -- Serhiy

1       Leschenko was the one who either found or identified the  
2 ledger, and either he or someone in law enforcement turned  
3 that ledger over to the Anticorruption Bureau. That's what I  
4 remember.

5           Q    On page 11, there's a paragraph that begins, "The  
6 scrutiny around the ledgers" --

7           A    Yes.

8           Q    -- "combined with that from other stories about his  
9 Ukraine work -- proved too much, and he stepped down from the  
10 Trump campaign less than a week after the Times story."

11          And that's relating to Manafort.

12          A    Yes.

13          Q    "At the time, Leschenko suggested that his  
14 motivation was partly to undermine Trump."

15          Was it well-known that Leschenko was, indeed, trying to  
16 undermine candidate Trump at the time?

17          A    So this would have been what year? Not to me.  
18          Yeah, it was a 2017 article, but I don't know when they were  
19 talking about here.

20          Q    These things were occurring during the 2016  
21 election.

22          A    2016 election, right. Not known to me.

23          Q    Okay. When you arrived at post, did your political  
24 adviser there or anybody give you a briefing on some of the  
25 issues relating to Leschenko?

1           A     One of the questions was -- so I mentioned he was a  
2     reformer. One of the -- and he had supported Zelensky,  
3     President Zelensky, and had given him, had given Zelensky  
4     some credibility as a reformer. The other reformer, by the  
5     way, we've already talked about is a man named Alexander  
6     Danyliuk. And so those two people joined Zelensky's team  
7     early as reformers.

8                   What I was told, in answer to your question,  
9     Mr. Counselor, was that Leschenko took himself off of the  
10    Zelensky team because of these -- this controversy.

11           Q     Okay. At the bottom of page 11, the report, the  
12    Politico report notes that Leschenko told the Financial  
13    Times, you know, about 2 weeks after the news conference that  
14    he was trying to undermine candidate Trump.

15                   The newspaper goes on to note, the Financial Times, that  
16    Trump's candidacy had spurred Kyiv's wider political  
17    leadership to do something they would never have attempted  
18    before, intervene, however indirectly, in a U.S. election.

19                   What do you know about attempts of the Ukrainian  
20    Government or Ukrainians to intervene in the 2016 election?

21           A     Mr. Castor, I don't know about those attempts.

22           Q     Okay. And has that been part of any briefings that  
23    you received once you arrived at post?

24           A     No.

25           Q     Okay. And so that's not a concern that's been

1       communicated to you as you've settled in?

2           A    Correct.

3           Q    Flipping over to page 14, the paragraph begins  
4        "Ukraine's Minister of Internal Affairs, Arsen Avakov." You  
5        with me?

6           A    Fourteen. Yes. Yep.

7           Q    Okay -- piled on, trashing Trump on Twitter as a  
8        clown and asserting that Trump is an even bigger danger to  
9        the U.S. than terrorism.

10           The Politico story goes on to report that Avakov also  
11        disparaged the President in Facebook posts.

12           What do you know about Avakov?

13           A    So he is the Minister of Internal Affairs and was  
14        the Minister of Internal Affairs under President Poroshenko  
15        as one of only two carryovers from the Poroshenko Cabinet to  
16        the Zelensky Cabinet. He, as I think I mentioned earlier  
17        when we were talking about Lutsenko, the Minister of  
18        Interior, which Avakov is now, controls the police, which  
19        gives him significant influence in the government.

20           Q    Avakov, he's a relatively influential Minister. Is  
21        that right?

22           A    That is correct.

23           Q    Does it concern you that at one time he was being  
24        highly critical of candidate Trump?

25           A    It does.

1           Q     And did you ever have any awareness of that before  
2     I called your attention to this?

3           A     I haven't. This is surprising. Disappointing,  
4     but --

5           Q     Flipping to page 15, the paragraph that begins with  
6     "Andriy Artymenko."

7           A     At the top, yeah.

8           Q     Ukrainian Parliamentarian associated with  
9     conservative opposition, you know, met with Trump's team  
10    during the campaign. And he was quoted saying: It was clear  
11    they were supporting Hillary Clinton's candidacy. They did  
12    everything from organizing meetings with the Clinton team to  
13    publicly supporting her to criticizing Trump. I think they  
14    simply didn't meet because they thought Hillary would win.

15           This is yet another Ukrainian Parliamentarian, you know,  
16    going on the record in a news account asserting that the  
17    Ukrainian Government establishment was, in fact, supporting  
18    Hillary Clinton.

19           Is this a new fact for you?

20           A     This is a new fact for me. I've not read this  
21    article. So this was a 2017 article. So I didn't know  
22    that -- I don't know Artymenko, so I haven't had a chance to  
23    deal with him. And the answer is yes, new fact.

24           Q     Does it concern you?

25           A     Yes. Same thing, for the same reason.

1           Q     Now, is it reasonable for someone in the Trump  
2     administration to conclude that if Artemenko -- and I  
3     apologize if --

4           A     No, you're doing fine.

5           Q     -- any of my pronunciations are --

6           A     You're doing fine.

7           Q     If Artemenko, Chaly, Avakov, Leschenko were  
8     engaged -- these are all legitimate people in the Ukraine,  
9     right?

10          A     I don't know how legitimate Artemenko is, but --

11          Q     He's an elected member of the Parliament?

12          A     He's an elected member of the Parliament, which  
13     means -- which may mean that he could -- you can buy your way  
14     into the Parliament.

15          Q     Okay. But certainly a government official?

16          A     Certainly a -- a deputy, a Rada deputy, yeah.

17          Q     Avakov is a legitimate power player in Ukraine?

18          A     At least a power player, that's right. That's  
19     right.

20          Q     And Chaly is the Ambassador to the U.S.?

21          A     Chaly is the Ambassador.

22          Q     Okay. And Leschenko was a man of some  
23     significance, right?

24          A     Leschenko was a well-known reformer and a well --  
25     and a good journalist beforehand, so yes, well-recognized.

1           Q     So isn't it possible that Trump administration  
2     officials might have a good-founded belief, whether true or  
3     untrue, that there were forces in the Ukraine that were  
4     operating against them?

5           A     Mr. Castor, based on this Politico article, which,  
6     again, surprises me, disappoints me because I think it's a  
7     mistake for any diplomat or any government official in one  
8     country to interfere in the political life of another  
9     country. That's disappointing.

10          Q     So the question is, isn't it fair to say that, if  
11     you're aligned with the Trump administration, isn't it  
12     legitimate to have a good-faith belief that Ukrainians were  
13     operating against you in the 2016 election?

14          A     That's certainly the thrust of this article.

15          Q     And this isn't an opinion piece. I mean, this is  
16     not an opinion piece. This is a journalist --

17          A     This is a journalist. And, as you pointed out,  
18     it's Kenneth Vogel, who also writes for The New York Times.

19          Q     So it's not a fringe, you know, journalist. I  
20     mean, this is a mainstream journalist for Politico and now  
21     the New York Times, not an opinion piece. And to the extent  
22     he's reporting and documenting these facts, I mean, isn't it  
23     fair to say that if you're aligned with the Trump  
24     administration, you might have a good-faith belief that the  
25     Ukrainians were supporting Hillary Clinton and trying to

1           undermine him?

2           A    You could have that opinion, that some were. If  
3           this reporting is correct, you could certainly have the  
4           opinion that some Ukrainians were.

5           Q    Okay. And do you have any -- since you've arrived  
6           at post, has anyone briefed you to try to debunk any of these  
7           allegations?

8           A    No.

9           Q    Okay. So nobody at the Embassy has sat you down in  
10           briefings and said, "Ambassador, there are allegations out  
11           there that the Ukrainians were working for Clinton and  
12           against Trump, but I want to tell you that didn't happen";  
13           nobody came and briefed you on that?

14           A    Correct.

15           Q    Since your time considering the post, which I think  
16           you I think you mentioned was the end of May, and then you  
17           arrived relatively quickly, to your credit, in June, did you  
18           get any background on some of the concerns that the folks  
19           aligned with the President had about the Ukrainians  
20           interfering with the election, or allegedly?

21           A    No. Mr. Giuliani and his -- who is influential  
22           with the President, and his efforts were known. I wouldn't  
23           say -- I wouldn't say "briefed." What the Embassy tries to  
24           do, as a general rule, is stay out of either our domestic or  
25           Ukraine internal politics. So we have not -- we have tried

1       to avoid dealing certainly with Mr. Giuliani and the kind of  
2       efforts that he was interested in. So that's, again, for --  
3       we don't get involved in election campaigns on either side.

4           Q     But you describe a difficult environment leading up  
5       to Ambassador Yovanovitch's recall, and you testified about  
6       some of the concerns you had before accepting the post.

7           Did anyone give you any additional background about what  
8       the issues are that concerned the President or was motivating  
9       Mr. Giuliani?

10          A     No.

11          Q     Okay. Did you have a general understanding of what  
12       Giuliani's concerns were?

13          A     Again, our focus has -- we've attempted to keep the  
14       focus on our bilateral relations and away from domestic  
15       politics or Ukrainian internal politics, to the degree we  
16       can. So --

17          Q     Just forgive me. If there was a concern about the  
18       2016 election and concern about investigations, did you ever  
19       try to do some due diligence and find out exactly what the  
20       concerns were before you arrived at post?

21          A     No.

22          Q     Did you have any conversations with Yovanovitch  
23       about this?

24          A     About --

25          Q     The environment, the snake pit I think you called

1       it.

2           A    Certainly, we had -- I had a conversation with her  
3       in Kyiv and then again in Washington about the -- about that  
4       environment, about how the domestic, our domestic politics  
5       had gotten into the -- into affecting her career.

6           Q    Okay. But did you ever have a discussion about  
7       what, you know, when you're -- did you ever try to get into  
8       the -- what was the genuine concern from Giuliani, other  
9       than --

10          A    No.

11          Q    Okay. You met with Yovanovitch a couple times, you  
12       said --

13          A    Yes.

14          Q    -- when you were over there as an election  
15       observer.

16          A    Yes.

17          Q    And then you met with her again after she came  
18       home --

19          A    Correct.

20          Q    -- before you went out?

21          A    Correct.

22          Q    So is that roughly three conversations?

23          A    Three conversations, at least, yeah.

24          Q    And what do you recall her telling you?

25          A    I recall in particular the last conversation, which

1       was in my office at the Institute of Peace. She was very  
2       emotional about having been pulled out early. As she has  
3       indicated, she didn't think she had made mistakes or done  
4       something wrong. She felt like someone had -- she felt that  
5       someone or some people may have had other motives for wanting  
6       her not to be there.

7           And I think she's indicated that maybe in her testimony  
8       or the papers or something that has described her testimony.  
9       She made that same point to me in May.

10          Q      Did she say who?

11          A      I don't recall her mentioning any specific names.  
12        I'm not even sure she knew the people. She had a sense that  
13        there were people who wanted to invest in Ukraine or wanted  
14        to sell things to Ukraine that thought that her  
15        anticorruption stance was getting in their way. I don't  
16        remember -- if she mentioned any names, I don't remember  
17        them.

18          Q      Okay. Did you have any discussions -- how many  
19        discussions did you have with Brechbuhl before taking the  
20        post?

21          A      Two.

22          Q      And during those two discussions, did you have any  
23        dialogue with him about what was going on over there?

24          A      Again, he -- with Counselor Brechbuhl, it was  
25        more -- the two conversations were on like the 23rd of May

1 and the 28th of May, and the second with the Secretary. And  
2 they were focused more on my interest, my qualifications,  
3 rather than anything about Ukraine policy.

4 Q Did they ever tell you they'd have your back?

5 A Secretary Pompeo did say that he'd support me on  
6 this strong Ukraine policy. That was my condition for going  
7 out, and he said he would.

8 Q And did you have a relatively open communication  
9 with both Counselor Brechbuhl and the Secretary?

10 A Yes.

11 Q So, if you needed them, they would engage with you,  
12 right?

13 A They would. And I didn't -- and the Secretary said  
14 any time. I didn't abuse that and I only -- but I did call  
15 the counselor a couple of times, you know, and -- from Kyiv.  
16 So I met with him twice while I was -- before I left, called  
17 him a couple times to check in when I started to get  
18 concerned about the security assistance, for example. But  
19 yes, he was available and responsive.

20 Q Okay. Did you ever have any discussions with the  
21 Secretary or the counselor about the circumstances of  
22 Ambassador Yovanovitch being recalled?

23 A That was a concern I had before I agreed with them  
24 to take the job. So it may -- it could have been part of  
25 that conversation, Mr. Castor. I don't recall specifically

1 talking to them about Ambassador Yovanovitch.

2 Q Did they ever give you any assurances that this  
3 won't happen again and --

4 A No, no. I didn't ask for and didn't receive any.

5 Q Okay. The issues that motivated her recall, did  
6 they give you any indication that they were still viable  
7 issues that made the environment tricky?

8 A They didn't.

9 Q But you expected it would be?

10 A I expected it would be.

11 Q Did you ever have any communications with Mr.  
12 Giuliani --

13 A None.

14 Q -- directly?

15 A No. He visited Kyiv in 2008 or '07, while I was  
16 there. 2008, I think. And I remember shaking his hand. He  
17 was America's mayor. But otherwise, not.

18 Q But for times relevant, May 28th on, you've never  
19 spoken to Mr. Giuliani?

20 A No, no.

21 Q Has anyone ever asked you to speak to Mr. Giuliani?

22 A No.

23 Q And if I may, have you spoken to the President of  
24 the United States?

25 A I have not.

1                   Q     Okay. You had no communications with the President  
2     of the United States?

3                   A     Correct.

4                   Q     Have you had any communications with Acting Chief  
5     of Staff Mulvaney?

6                   A     None.

7                   Q     The White House officials you have had discussions  
8     with, have you identified them for the most part in your  
9     statement?

10                  A     Yes.

11                  Q     Okay. So it's Ambassador Bolton, Fiona Hill, Dr.  
12     Hill, Mr. Vindman, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman?

13                  A     Vindman, right.

14                  Q     Any others that were --

15                  A     Tim Morrison took --

16                  Q     Tim Morrison.

17                  A     -- Fiona's place.

18                  Q     Okay.

19                  A     Yeah, I think those are the ones.

20                  Q     And once you arrived at post, did you have any  
21     occasion to engage the Secretary on any of these issues, ask  
22     the Secretary for his assistance in pushing back on the  
23     irregular part of the policy?

24                  A     So I went to the Secretary at the end of August in  
25     a -- in a cable expressing my concern about -- August 29th,

1       my concern about the hold on security assistance.

2           Q     Okay.  Was that the first time you engaged the  
3           Secretary on this?

4           A     Yes.

5           Q     Okay.  In your statement, you walk us through what  
6           was a regular, formal, diplomatic process that you were the  
7           point person for, and then there was an irregular, informal  
8           channel, and that was concerning to you.  Is that fair?

9           A     Not at the beginning.

10          Q     Okay.

11          A     At the beginning, as I said, I felt the goals were  
12          aligned.  I thought the goals of having -- the overall goal  
13          of having strong U.S.-Ukraine relations was supported by --  
14          certainly by -- I knew by Ambassadors Sondland and Volker.

15          I didn't -- I never, as I said, haven't had much  
16          dealings with Secretary Perry, but everything leads me to  
17          believe that he also supported that.  And so that irregular  
18          is not necessarily bad.

19          Q     Okay.

20          A     And it wasn't -- I didn't think it was bad.  I  
21          didn't think it was a problem in the beginning.  And,  
22          actually, it could have been helpful, because Ambassador  
23          Sondland is able -- is able to call the President, and that's  
24          a valuable thing if you want to try to move our U.S.-Ukraine  
25          relations along.  So, at the beginning, it was not a problem.

1 Q How long have you known Ambassador Volker for?

2 A So probably 20 years. A long time.

3 Q And is he a man of integrity?

4 A He is a man of integrity.

5 Q And he is somebody that's always, to the best of  
6 your knowledge, acted in the best interests of the United  
7 States?

8 A He -- when he got involved with Mr. Giuliani, I  
9 think that that pulled him away from or it diverted him from  
10 being focused on what I thought needed to be focused on, that  
11 is -- yeah. So, in general, yes, but the Giuliani factor I  
12 think affected Ambassador Volker.

13 Q But as a man of integrity, if he genuinely believed  
14 it was in the best interests of the United States to engage  
15 with Giuliani, do you agree that that's -- he was acting in  
16 the best interests of the United States when he did that?

17 A I think he thought he was.

18 Q There's this May 23rd briefing in the Oval  
19 Office --

20 A Yes.

21 Q -- where the delegation that went to the  
22 inaugural --

23 A Yes.

24 Q -- communicated with the President.

25 A Yes.

1           Q    We've had some accounts of that meeting.

2           A    I'm sure.

3           Q    And Ambassador Volker was there. Obviously, we've  
4    talked to him at some length. Ambassador Sondland. And  
5    characterizations of that meeting have differed sometimes  
6    between the actual participants and those reporting on what  
7    they think had occurred.

8           For example, it's been -- you know, the President has  
9    been characterized or has been quoted as saying, "Work with  
10   Rudy." Is that something you heard?

11          A    Yes.

12          Q    Okay. And then it's also been related to us that  
13    the President said, "Talk to Rudy," and it's in a dismissive  
14    sort of way. You know, the President had his concerns about  
15    corruption in Ukraine and, you know, a laundry list of  
16    reasons, including the fact that the President believed that  
17    there were Ukrainians trying to work against him in the  
18    election, right?

19          A    As we established, some Ukrainians, a couple of  
20    Ukrainians. And the important point here is none of those,  
21    with the exception of Avakov, who is still -- none of those  
22    were in or are in the Zelensky administration.

23          So that's what -- as I understand it, that's what  
24    Ambassador Volker, Sondland, Perry were coming back to tell  
25    President Trump, that, you know, we just met President

1       Zelensky, and he supports what you support. I've heard  
2       several people said -- made -- tried to make that point.

3           Q     And the participants of the meeting have told us  
4       that they briefed the President, and the President wasn't  
5       having it.

6           A     Right.

7           Q     He said negative things about the country of  
8       Ukraine.

9           A     I've heard that.

10          Q     And he didn't, you know, get into specifics. He  
11       simply said: It's been related to us, talk to Rudy. If you  
12       think Ukraine is doing such -- you know, they've turned the  
13       corner and Zelensky is the reformer he says he's going to be,  
14       you know, talk to Rudy.

15           Is that fair?

16           THE CHAIRMAN: If I could just interject, and I have to  
17       make this advisory periodically. What counsel represents  
18       prior witnesses may have said or not said, we cannot vouch  
19       for the accuracy.

20          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Okay.

21          THE CHAIRMAN: Unless you are a percipient witness, you  
22       should not assume facts that are not in evidence before you.

23          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24           BY MR. CASTOR:

25          Q     You know, there's nuances that we aren't aware of,

1       you know, that occur in these meetings. There's ambiguities,  
2       and in the, you know, ambiguity a lot of times people jump to  
3       conclusions. And so the question is, is there a difference  
4       between talk to Rudy and work with Rudy?

5           A    I don't know.

6           Q    Okay.

7           A    I don't know.

8           Q    And was that related to you by Ambassador Sondland  
9       or Volker?

10          A    The difference between those two?

11          Q    Yes.

12          A    No.

13          Q    Or what had to be effectuated with Mr. Giuliani?

14          A    Here's what I understood from Ambassador Volker and  
15       Ambassador Sondland. In order to get President Zelensky and  
16       President Trump in a meeting in the Oval Office, they took  
17       from that May 23rd meeting that they needed to work with Rudy  
18       Giuliani, so -- and so they did.

19          Q    What did Volker relate to you about next steps  
20       then? You said you talk with Volker a lot, right?

21          A    I do.

22          Q    And what did he -- do you remember some of the blow  
23       by blow, the play by --

24          A    Well, no, actually, he didn't tell me anything  
25       about him reaching out to Giuliani. And about the same time

1       he had his breakfast with Giuliani, he mentioned that I think  
2       in a text to me and Gordon. And about that same time, Fiona  
3       Hill, Dr. Hill mentioned that same thing, that she had heard  
4       that Kurt had been in touch with or met with Rudy Giuliani.  
5       That was -- I think that was the first time I was aware that  
6       Kurt had been in touch with Giuliani along these lines.

7           Q     Did Ambassador Volker give you any readout of his  
8       conversations or what he was doing?

9           A     He didn't.

10          Q     Okay. So he didn't tell you that he told Mr.  
11       Giuliani that there was no good-faith basis to investigate  
12       the Bidens?

13          A     He didn't tell me anything about his conversation  
14       with Giuliani.

15          Q     Did you ever come to learn from Sondland or other  
16       players that that was the case?

17          A     No. That was the case between Volker and Giuliani?

18          Q     Correct.

19          A     No.

20          Q     Would that surprise you if Volker had communicated  
21       that to Giuliani?

22          A     Communicated what?

23          Q     That there is no good faith basis to investigate  
24       the Bidens.

25          A     No knowledge. I can't answer.

1                   MR. CASTOR: I have about 8 or 9 minutes left and I  
2 promised our members we would pivot to them at the end of  
3 the -- at the end of our round, so I would like to do that.

4                   MR. NUNES: Thank you, Mr. Castor.

5                   Ambassador, welcome. You're aware that this committee  
6 had an investigation into the 2016 elections, the House  
7 Intelligence Committee?

8                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Am I aware that there is one? Yes.

9                   MR. NUNES: Yes, that there was one that completed, and  
10 now those investigations have even continued.

11                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't know much about it, Mr.  
12 Chairman, but -- Mr. Nunes, but --

13                  MR. NUNES: You're also aware that -- you're aware of  
14 the Bob Mueller special counsel investigation --

15                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I am aware.

16                  MR. NUNES: -- of the 2016 elections.

17                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I am.

18                  MR. NUNES: You may not be aware, but at least the  
19 Republicans on this committee were very concerned by  
20 Ukraine's actions during the 2016 election, and they have  
21 long been a target of our investigation and have continued  
22 today to try to get to the bottom of what they were up to in  
23 the 2016 election between the Ambassador's comments here and  
24 between other incidents that are out there.

25                  Most notably, are you familiar with -- well, I know

1       you're familiar because you talked about Leschenko earlier --  
2       former journalist turned politician --

3           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Leschenko, yes.

4           MR. NUNES: Do you have any current involvement with  
5       Leschenko? Do you run into him now or you're just familiar  
6       with him?

7           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm familiar with him. I think I  
8       met him in my -- in the 2006-2009 time period, or maybe it  
9       was an earlier visit in like 2014. But he's not in the  
10      government now, and he's not in the Parliament now, I'm  
11      pretty sure.

12        MR. NUNES: Okay. So he's of particular interest to at  
13      least the Republicans in Congress. Are you aware that he was  
14      a source for the Democrats and the Clinton campaign's dirt  
15      that they dug up on the President and fed to the FBI?

16        AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I am not aware.

17        MR. NUNES: Okay. So I didn't think you were aware of  
18      that, but I wanted to make sure you knew that he is -- by  
19      witnesses who have testified before this committee, he's the  
20      source of that dirt that was then used -- you're familiar  
21      with -- you've heard of the Steele dossier, I assume?

22        AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I have.

23        MR. NUNES: Okay. So that is our real concern in  
24      Ukraine over the 2016 election. So I understand that you, as  
25      an Ambassador, you don't like to get involved in politics,

1       but the fact of the matter is the Ukrainians decided to get  
2       involved in politics and be, in almost all cases, supportive  
3       of the Democrats and helped to deliver dirt that was then  
4       used by the --

5           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Nunes, the only comment I would  
6       make on that is that, again, according to this Politico  
7       document, which is similar to what you're describing, there  
8       were a couple of Ukrainians who did what you said.

9           When you say "Ukrainians," that paints a broad brush.  
10       And President -- the reason I raise this is that President  
11       Zelensky wants to make it very clear to us and to President  
12       Trump that it wasn't him and it wasn't his people.

13           MR. NUNES: Right. But at the time of the -- at the  
14       time when Mr. Giuliani and Republicans in Congress are  
15       raising these concerns about what was happening in Ukraine,  
16       you know, that's when the Mueller investigation is still  
17       ongoing, our probe is still ongoing, looking into getting to  
18       the bottom of FISA abuse and other matters.

19           So I know you don't want to get involved in politics,  
20       but those are still just ongoing concerns of the Congress.  
21       Thank you for your attendance today.

22           I'll yield to Mr. Jordan.

23           MR. JORDAN: Real quick if I could, Ambassador, on that  
24       last point. President Zelensky does want to clean up  
25       corruption. You know, he's been viewed as a reformer, but I

1 think you said earlier to Mr. Castor's questions that  
2 Mr. Avakov is still in the government. Is that right?

3 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct.

4 MR. JORDAN: And he has a pretty important position?

5 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: He does.

6 MR. JORDAN: And he's the guy who said that President  
7 Trump, during the 2016 campaign, was -- I think he referred  
8 to him in social media postings as a clown and as worse than  
9 a terrorist. Is that accurate?

10 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Is that what -- is that the quote  
11 out of this Politico document?

12 MR. JORDAN: It is.

13 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

14 MR. JORDAN: And he's currently in the government,  
15 Minister of Interior, in charge of the police in Ukraine. Is  
16 that right?

17 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: He is. He is. I suspect he would  
18 not say the same thing today that he said then.

19 MR. JORDAN: No, I understand that, but I just want to  
20 be clear.

21 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: But 2016.

22 MR. JORDAN: All right. Thank you.

23 Mr. Ratcliffe has a couple.

24 MR. RATCLIFFE: Ambassador Taylor, my name is John  
25 Ratcliffe.

1           I want to read from -- direct you to your opening  
2        statement this morning, page 9, the bottom paragraph, and it  
3        reads: "Just days later, on August 27, Ambassador Bolton  
4        arrived in Kyiv and met with President Zelensky. During  
5        their meeting" --

6           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, can I get you to hold  
7        on? I'm looking at a different one. Yeah, thank you.

8           MR. RATCLIFFE: Last paragraph, page 9.

9           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, got it. Okay, met with. Yes.

10          MR. RATCLIFFE: "During their meeting, security  
11        assistance was not discussed -- amazingly, news of the hold  
12        did not leak out until August 29. I, on the other hand, was  
13        all too aware of and still troubled by the hold."

14          Have I read that correctly?

15          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

16          MR. RATCLIFFE: Okay. It sounds like, from your  
17        statement today, that you were aware of the hold and troubled  
18        by it but that President Zelensky was not aware of it at that  
19        point in time.

20          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct.

21          MR. RATCLIFFE: Okay. So, based on your knowledge,  
22        nobody in the Ukrainian Government became aware of a hold on  
23        military aid until 2 days later, on August 29th.

24          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's my understanding.

25          MR. RATCLIFFE: That's your understanding. And that

1       would have been well over a month after the July 25th call  
2       between President Trump and President Zelensky.

3           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

4           MR. RATCLIFFE: So you're not a lawyer, are you,  
5       Ambassador Taylor?

6           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I am not.

7           MR. RATCLIFFE: Okay. So the idea of a quid pro quo is  
8       it's a concept where there is a demand for action or an  
9       attempt to influence action in exchange for something else.  
10      And in this case, when people are talking about a quid pro  
11      quo, that something else is military aid.

12       So, if nobody in the Ukrainian Government is aware of a  
13       military hold at the time of the Trump-Zelensky call, then,  
14       as a matter of law and as a matter of fact, there can be no  
15       quid pro quo, based on military aid. I just want to be real  
16       clear that, again, as of July 25th, you have no knowledge of  
17       a quid pro quo involving military aid.

18       AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: July 25th is a week after the hold  
19       was put on the security assistance. And July 25th, they had  
20       a conversation between the two Presidents, where it was not  
21       discussed.

22       MR. RATCLIFFE: And to your knowledge, nobody in the  
23       Ukrainian Government was aware of the hold?

24       AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct.

25       MR. RATCLIFFE: Great. Thank you for clarifying.

1           I yield back.

2           THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. The time of the minority has  
3        expired.

4           Let's break for lunch until 1:30. I want to remind  
5        members they are not to discuss the substance of the  
6        Ambassador's testimony. And we will resume at 1:30.

7        [Recess.]

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1 [1:56 p.m.]

2 THE CHAIRMAN: We're back on the record.

3 Ambassador, I wanted to just ask you a few followup  
4 questions to the questions you received from the minority,  
5 and then I want to go through some of your opening statement.  
6 Then I'll hand it over to Mr. Noble, who will go much more  
7 methodically than I will through your testimony and the  
8 timeline.

9 You were asked by my colleagues in the minority doesn't  
10 the U.S. have a legitimate interest in fighting corruption,  
11 and I think you would agree that we do. Is that right?

12 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct, Chairman.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: And in fact, Ambassador Yovanovitch was  
14 doing exactly that. She was urging the Ukrainians at every  
15 opportunity to fight corruption that had plagued Ukraine.

16 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: And it came to your attention that part  
18 of the reason why people in Ukraine and maybe some in the  
19 hornets' nest or vipers' nest in the United States wanted her  
20 out was that her efforts to fight corruption were getting in  
21 the way of some potentially corrupt business deals they  
22 wanted to make happen. Is that a fair summary?

23 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That could be the case. I don't  
24 know the direct links there, but there were people who were  
25 concerned that she was so tough on -- it would be hard for

1                   them to do the kinds of deals that they wanted to do.

2                   THE CHAIRMAN: Because she was fighting corruption in  
3                   Ukraine?

4                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, yes, and supporting reformers  
5                   or other people in the government who were fighting  
6                   corruption in Ukraine.

7                   THE CHAIRMAN: And you can distinguish, can't you,  
8                   between a legitimate interest in getting a country to fight  
9                   corruption and an illegitimate interest in getting a foreign  
10                  government to interfere in U.S. Presidential elections?

11                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: There is a difference.

12                  THE CHAIRMAN: And wouldn't you say that trying to get a  
13                  foreign country to intervene in a U.S. Presidential election  
14                  is not fighting corruption, it is in itself corruption?

15                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, you're taking me  
16                  beyond my area of expertise. Just the facts are what I can  
17                  attest to, but the -- what I said earlier about institutions  
18                  I think is -- the way to fight corruption is to fix the  
19                  courts and fix the judges.

20                  So it's an institutional rather than, as you point out,  
21                  rather than individual cases, which may or may not get us to  
22                  a reformed, less corrupt system.

23                  THE CHAIRMAN: And one of the concerns you had, though,  
24                  was that there were efforts being made through this irregular  
25                  channel to get Ukraine to interfere in U.S. politics and the

1       next election, is that right?

2                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The irregular channel seemed to  
3       focus on specific issues, specific cases, rather than the  
4       regular channel's focus on institution building. So the  
5       irregular channel, I think under the influence of Mr.  
6       Giuliani, wanted to focus on one or two specific cases,  
7       irrespective of whether it helped solve the corruption  
8       problem, fight the corruption problem.

9                   THE CHAIRMAN: And those two cases you mentioned, the  
10       Burisma and the Bidens and the 2016 election, those were both  
11       individual investigations that were sought by Mr. Giuliani  
12       because he believed it would help his client, the President  
13       of the United States, right?

14                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's my understanding.

15                   THE CHAIRMAN: Let me go through -- I want to ask you  
16       about the Politico article which minority counsel spent about  
17       a third of their time asking you about this article. Prior  
18       to today, had you ever read this article?

19                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I had not.

20                   THE CHAIRMAN: Are you able to confirm in any way any of  
21       the allegations in the article?

22                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned to Mr.  
23       Castor, I was surprised and disappointed to read what these  
24       Ukrainians were reported to have said and done.

25                   THE CHAIRMAN: But you're not in a position to confirm

1       or deny whether the article is right, not right, half right,  
2       or anything of the sort?

3           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, sir.

4           THE CHAIRMAN: And this article didn't affect your  
5       decision-making at any time, because you were unaware of it?

6           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I was unaware of it. It was 2 years  
7       ago.

8           THE CHAIRMAN: There are at least a couple issues that  
9       have been raised by your testimony. The first involves  
10      conditionality surrounding the desperately sought meeting  
11      between the two Presidents, desperately sought by the  
12      Ukrainians, that is.

13           And the second involves conditionality around military  
14      aid. So let me go through your testimony, if I could, and  
15      ask you about a few of those -- both of those issues.

16           On page 5 of your testimony, in the third paragraph, you  
17      say: "But during my subsequent communications with  
18      Ambassador Volker and Sondland, they relayed to me that the  
19      President, quote, "wanted to hear from Zelensky," unquote,  
20      before scheduling the meeting in the Oval Office. It was not  
21      clear to me what this meant.

22           Now, I take it, Ambassador, you used that word "before"  
23      deliberately, that is, they wanted to hear from Zelensky  
24      before they would schedule this meeting. Is that right?

25           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct.

1                   THE CHAIRMAN: Now, at the time I think you said it  
2 wasn't clear to you what this meant.

3                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is also correct.

4                   THE CHAIRMAN: And in the two paragraphs below, you say:  
5                    "I sensed something odd when Ambassador Sondland told me on  
6 June 28 that he did not wish to include most of the regular  
7 interagency participants in the call planned with President  
8 Zelensky later that day."

9                   Why did you sense something odd about that?

10                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: He and I were on the phone talking  
11 about the timing of this call. This call had been set up.  
12 Obviously, when you're trying to get the head of state on a  
13 call, get President Zelensky on a call, you had to work  
14 through the timing. Was it convenient? Could he -- there  
15 may have had to be interpreters present. He had to be at the  
16 right phone. So we were working on when the meeting would  
17 happen.

18                  On the phone, Ambassador Sondland told me that the  
19 timing was going to change, that the time of the phone call  
20 was going to change. And I asked him something like,  
21 shouldn't we let everybody else know who's supposed to be on  
22 this call? And the answer was, don't worry about it. Even  
23 his staff, I think, were not aware that the time had changed.

24

25

1                   [2:02 p.m.]

2                   THE CHAIRMAN: And what was odd to you about that?

3                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: This suggested to me that there were  
4                   the two channels. This suggested to me that the normal  
5                   channel, where you would have staff on the phone call, was  
6                   being cut out, and the other channel, of people who were  
7                   working, again, toward a goal which I supported, which was  
8                   having a meeting to further U.S.-Ukrainian relations, I  
9                   supported, but that irregular channel didn't have a respect  
10                  for or an interest in having the normal staff participate in  
11                  this call with the head of state.

12                  THE CHAIRMAN: So was this an early indication to you  
13                  that these two channels were diverging?

14                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It was.

15                  THE CHAIRMAN: And the interests of the irregular  
16                  channel, represented by Mr. Giuliani, may not be the same  
17                  interests as the State Department and what was in the best  
18                  interest of the United States?

19                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That second part I came to believe.  
20                  I'm not sure it was at this point. This is within a week, a  
21                  week and a half, of me -- 10 days of me arriving there. And  
22                  so I was still, maybe naively, but I was still of the view  
23                  that I was on -- I was part of a team that might have several  
24                  parts but we were moving in the same direction.

25                  So it was not -- I think, Mr. Chairman, it was not yet.

1       That would come.

2           THE CHAIRMAN: But Ambassador Sondland made it clear not  
3       only that he didn't wish to include most of the regular  
4       interagency participants but also that no one was  
5       transcribing or monitoring the call as they added President  
6       Zelensky. What struck you as odd about that?

7           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Same concern. That is, in the  
8       normal, regular channel, the State Department operations  
9       center that was putting the call together would stay on the  
10       line, in particular when you were having a conversation with  
11       the head of state, they would stay on the line, transcribe,  
12       take notes so that there could be a record of the discussion  
13       with this head of state. It is an official discussion.

14           When he wanted to be sure that there was not, the State  
15       Department operations center agreed. And they told us, they  
16       said -- in response to his request, they said, we won't  
17       monitor and will not -- and we certainly won't transcribe  
18       because we're going to sign off.

19           THE CHAIRMAN: On the following page of your testimony,  
20       page 6, second paragraph, you testified: "By mid-July it was  
21       becoming clear to me that the meeting President Zelensky  
22       wanted was conditioned on the investigations of Burisma and  
23       alleged Ukrainian interference in the 2016 U.S. elections.  
24       It was also clear that this condition was driven by the  
25       irregular policy channel I had come to understand was guided

1 by Mr. Giuliani."

2 How had that become clear to you by mid-July?

3 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: In the subsequent paragraphs,

4 Mr. Chairman, I tried to walk through that conclusion, how I  
5 came to that conclusion.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: And when you -- I'll go through that with  
7 you. But when you say "conditioned on the investigations," I  
8 take it by that you mean, unless President Zelensky would  
9 agree to do these investigations of Burisma, meaning the  
10 Bidens, and Ukrainian interference in 2016, he wasn't going  
11 to get the White House meeting. Is that right?

12 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct. Mr. Yermak,  
13 President Zelensky's assistant, came back at one point -- I  
14 think I talk about it in here -- and asked to nail down a  
15 date first and then he would make the statement -- he would  
16 make the statement of the investigations.

17 You know, Kurt and Ambassador Sondland did not --  
18 weren't able to make that offer, weren't able to nail down  
19 the date. But the point is, that was -- they saw that that  
20 was the condition.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: And, in fact, later on, they would insist  
22 that President Zelensky speak first. That is, until you say  
23 publicly you're going to do these two investigations we want  
24 for the President, you're not going to get that meeting.  
25 That was essentially the position that this irregular channel

1 took.

2 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Now, my colleague in the minority asked  
4 you about "quid pro quo." And are you a lawyer?

5 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I am not. I am not, Mr. Chairman.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Because he asked you about the legal  
7 definition of "quid pro quo." So you're not in a position to  
8 talk about legal definitions?

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I am definitely not in the position.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

11 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't speak Latin.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: And, of course, whether it meets a legal  
13 definition of "quid pro quo" or it doesn't is really  
14 irrelevant to what we're focused on here.

15 But it is your testimony that, hey, you don't make these  
16 public statements about these two political investigations we  
17 want, you're not getting this meeting -- you make these  
18 statements, you'll get the meeting; you don't make these  
19 statements, you won't. Was that your understanding of the  
20 state of affairs in July of 2019?

21 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Further down on page 6 of your testimony,  
23 second-to-last paragraph, at the end of that paragraph, you  
24 state: "All that the OMB staff person" -- now we're talking  
25 about the military assistance.

1                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Right.

2                   THE CHAIRMAN: "All that the OMB staff person said was  
3                   that the directive had come from the President to the Chief  
4                   of Staff to OMB."

5                   That is the directive not to provide the military  
6                   assistance, or to hold it up. Is that right?

7                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's correct.

8                   THE CHAIRMAN: "In an instant, I realized that one of  
9                   the key pillars of our strong support for Ukraine was  
10                   threatened. The irregular policy channel was running  
11                   contrary to the goals of longstanding U.S. policy."

12                   What did you mean by that?

13                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Longstanding goal of U.S. policy  
14                   would be to support Ukraine in its attempt to defend itself  
15                   against the Russians. Part of that was security assistance.  
16                   Security assistance had been very effective. It was weapons,  
17                   it was training, it was the communications equipment, it was  
18                   sustainables. It allowed Ukrainian soldiers to actually  
19                   defend themselves.

20                   That was longstanding U.S. policy. Even in the previous  
21                   administration, the previous administration did not provide  
22                   lethal weapons, but they did provide all this other -- so  
23                   that was longstanding policy. To stop it, to hold it, for no  
24                   apparent reason that I could see, was undercutting the  
25                   longstanding U.S. policy.

1                   THE CHAIRMAN: In the last paragraph on page 6, you say:  
2                   "There followed a series of NSC-led interagency meetings,  
3                   starting at the staff level and quickly reaching the level of  
4                   Cabinet secretaries. At every meeting, the unanimous  
5                   conclusion was that the security assistance should be  
6                   resumed, the hold lifted."

7                   I take it by that there was no dissent, no disagreement  
8                   with that. Everyone thought that, from the point of view of  
9                   U.S. national security and our ally fighting the Russians,  
10                  that security assistance should be resumed without delay.

11                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Unanimous opinion of every level of  
12                  interagency discussion.

13                  THE CHAIRMAN: Was that it should resume without delay?

14                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Without delay.

15                  THE CHAIRMAN: And you go on in that paragraph to say:  
16                  "My understanding was that the Secretaries of Defense and  
17                  State, the CIA Director, and the National Security Advisor  
18                  sought a joint meeting with the President to convince him to  
19                  release the hold, but such a meeting was hard to schedule."

20                  What do you deduce from that, that our ally is fighting  
21                  with the Russians, but all of these agencies that support  
22                  this can't get a meeting with the President to discuss it?

23                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It turns out, Mr. Chairman, that  
24                  those principals, as we call them, were on different trips at  
25                  different times. I think this was also about the time of the

1       Greenland question, about purchasing Greenland, which took up  
2       a lot of energy in the NSC.

3           THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. That's disturbing for a whole  
4       different reason.

5           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Different story. Different story.

6           But, no, the general point was, it was a scheduling  
7       issue, because they really wanted Secretary Esper to be  
8       there, for obvious reasons. Most of this assistance came  
9       through the Defense Department, and they wanted him to be  
10      there. He was traveling. There may have been an Afghanistan  
11      trip. I can't remember whether -- but the problem was  
12      getting the right people in the room at the same time.

13           There actually was a meeting on Afghanistan where all of  
14       the principals hoped to raise the Ukraine issue at the end of  
15       the Afghanistan meeting. Didn't happen.

16           All to say that there was a strong interest in having  
17       this meeting with the President to try to change the  
18       position.

19           THE CHAIRMAN: You go on to say, a couple paragraphs  
20       later, "In the same July 19 phone call, they gave me an  
21       account of the July 10 meeting with the Ukrainian officials  
22       at the White House. Specifically, they told me" -- and  
23       you're referring to Dr. Hill and Mr. Vindman, I believe --

24           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

25           THE CHAIRMAN: -- "that Ambassador Sondland had

1 connected 'investigations' with an Oval Office meeting for  
2 President Zelensky, which so irritated Ambassador Bolton that  
3 he abruptly ended the meeting, telling Dr. Hill and  
4 Mr. Vindman that they should have nothing to do with domestic  
5 politics."

6 Again, is this going to the conditionality of Ukraine  
7 having to do these investigations if they wanted the Oval  
8 Office meeting?

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That was the implication of that  
10 connection, of the connection between the meeting and  
11 investigations.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: You go on to say, in the second-to-last  
13 paragraph, "Also during our July 19 call, Dr. Hill informed  
14 me that Ambassador Volker had met with Mr. Giuliani to  
15 discuss Ukraine. This caught me by surprise. The next day I  
16 asked Ambassador Volker about that meeting, but received no  
17 response."

18 How did you ask him about the meeting?

19 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: By text message.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: And had he been pretty good about  
21 replying to you in the past?

22 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Pretty good, but, again, he's also  
23 on the road a lot. And sometimes he's in an airplane.  
24 Sometimes I'll get a message back. Most times I get a  
25 message back, but not all the time.

1                   THE CHAIRMAN: In this case, you got no reply at all, no  
2 matter when he got off an airplane or whatever took place  
3 thereafter?

4                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't remember getting a response.

5                   I think, at the same time, that was when I heard from  
6 Dr. Hill that Ambassador Volker had had a meeting with  
7 Mr. Giuliani, so that I got both bits of information the same  
8 time on, I think, the same meeting.

9                   THE CHAIRMAN: Turning to page 8 of your testimony:  
10                  "Also on July 20, I had a phone conversation with  
11 Mr. Danyliuk, during which he conveyed to me that President  
12 Zelensky did not want to be used as a pawn in a  
13 U.S. re-election campaign."

14                  Do you remember what Mr. Danyliuk said and why he was  
15 concerned he was being used as a pawn or why President  
16 Zelensky was concerned he was being used as a pawn in a  
17 U.S. reelection campaign?

18                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes. I think it was becoming clear  
19 to the Ukrainians that, in order to get this meeting that  
20 they wanted, they would have to commit to pursuing these  
21 investigations. And Mr. Danyliuk, at least, understood --  
22 and I'm sure that he briefed President Zelensky, I'm sure  
23 they had this conversation -- believed that opening those  
24 investigations, in particular on Burisma, would have involved  
25 Ukraine in the 2020 election campaign. He did not want to do

1       that.

2           THE CHAIRMAN: Turning to page 9 of your testimony,  
3 second paragraph, about midway through: "A formal  
4 U.S. request to the Ukrainians to conduct an investigation  
5 based on violations of their own law struck me as improper,  
6 and I recommended to Ambassador Volker that we 'stay clear.'"

7           What struck you as improper about it?

8           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It struck me as improper that the  
9 United States would be asking -- if the United States were to  
10 ask Ukraine to investigate an apparent violation of Ukrainian  
11 law, that would be improper.

12           If, on the other hand -- what is proper and what happens  
13 frequently is the United States goes to Ukraine and asks for  
14 their help to pursue an investigation of violations of  
15 American law, of U.S. law. That's what we have a mutual  
16 legal assistance treaty, an MLAT, for.

17           But this is different. This would be -- what Kurt was  
18 asking for was examples or precedent for asking the  
19 Ukrainians to investigate a violation of their own law.

20           THE CHAIRMAN: Well, there were two things that were  
21 improper about this, weren't there? There was the one you're  
22 mentioning now, which is that it wasn't appropriate to ask  
23 Ukraine to investigate a violation of Ukrainian law, correct?

24           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

25           THE CHAIRMAN: But it was also improper because the goal

1       of those investigations was to influence the U.S. election.

2       Isn't that also the case?

3           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

4           THE CHAIRMAN: If you could turn to page 10 of your  
5       written testimony.

6           One of my colleagues in the minority asked you about,  
7       well, how could it be a quid pro quo if the Ukrainians didn't  
8       know that security assistance was withheld. But Ukraine  
9       found out it was being withheld, did they not?

10          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: They did.

11          THE CHAIRMAN: And once they found out it was being  
12       withheld -- in the second paragraph of page 10 of your  
13       testimony, you state: "The same day that I sent my cable to  
14       the Secretary, August 29, Mr. Yermak contacted me and was  
15       very concerned, asking about the withheld security  
16       assistance. The hold that the White House had placed on the  
17       assistance had just been made public that day in a Politico  
18       story. At that point, I was embarrassed that I could give  
19       him no explanation for why it was withheld."

20          Why were you embarrassed by that?

21          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I was embarrassed because the United  
22       States, as the principal ally, the principal supporter for  
23       Ukraine, in general, but in particular in its fight with the  
24       Russians, was seen to be -- they found out that we had put a  
25       hold on the assistance that would help them fight the

1       Russians. And, at that point, I had nothing to tell them.

2           I mean, the obvious question was, "Why?" So Mr. Yermak  
3       and others were trying to figure out why this was, and they  
4       thought maybe, if they were to travel, if Mr. Yermak were to  
5       go to Washington to talk to someone here or -- the Defense  
6       Minister also contacted me later on. He wanted the same  
7       thing.

8           They thought that there must be some rational reason for  
9       this being held up, and they just didn't -- and maybe in  
10       Washington they didn't understand how important this  
11       assistance was to their fight and to their armed forces. And  
12       so maybe they could figure -- so they were just desperate.  
13       And I couldn't tell them. I didn't know and I didn't tell  
14       them, because we hadn't -- we hadn't -- there'd been no  
15       guidance that I could give them.

16           THE CHAIRMAN: And was it your suspicion at this point  
17       already that the assistance was being withheld potentially  
18       because of this help they wanted to get from the Ukrainians  
19       first?

20           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: You know, Mr. Chairman, same kind of  
21       question about how it dawns on you. My next paragraph said  
22       it had not occurred to me that the hold on security  
23       assistance could be related to the investigations. As of  
24       that time, it hadn't. I hadn't put those dots together. I  
25       hadn't connected those dots.

1           The next couple -- the next week, from the discussion on  
2           September 1st through about September 7th, it became clearer.

3           THE CHAIRMAN: So when you're asked about this by  
4           Mr. Yermak on August 29th, you're embarrassed because you  
5           hadn't been able to get an answer as to why the aid was  
6           withheld and you felt it desperately ought to be provided.

7           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm a representative of the United  
8           States Government out there, and he asked me a perfectly  
9           legitimate question, why are you holding up this assistance,  
10           and I couldn't tell him.

11           THE CHAIRMAN: Now, at this point, when you couldn't  
12           tell them, they were aware of other asks the President had  
13           made in that call, right? You know that now, although you  
14           didn't at the time.

15           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: On -- correct, on the meeting.

16           THE CHAIRMAN: And even though the Ukrainians learned on  
17           August 29th that there had been a hold placed, they certainly  
18           knew up through this whole period of June, July, August that  
19           they hadn't yet received the aid, right?

20           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The aid -- so, right. The aid had,  
21           by and large, not been put out to contract.

22           It's 1-year money, by the way. If we can make it 2-year  
23           money, that would be great. This is a little plug here for  
24           2-year money.

25           But it was 1-year money. It expired on the 30th of

1       September. And it was late in coming in the fiscal year, and  
2       so it had not been obligated. It hadn't been put into  
3       contracts yet. So, right, they -- I don't think they  
4       suspected anything during that time.

5           THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah. But you said, in the middle of  
6       page 10, "It had still not occurred to me that the hold on  
7       security assistance could be related to the 'investigations.'  
8       That, however, would soon change."

9           So let me ask you about when that began to change.

10          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yeah.

11          THE CHAIRMAN: In the middle of the following paragraph,  
12       you testify, "Indeed, I received a readout of the  
13       Pence-Zelensky meeting" -- that would be the meeting in  
14       Poland.

15          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: On the 1st of September.

16          THE CHAIRMAN: On the 1st of September. You received a  
17       readout "over the phone from Mr. Morrison, during which he  
18       told me President Zelensky had opened the meeting by asking  
19       the Vice President about security cooperation."

20          So this was -- if he opened the meeting with this, this  
21       was foremost on President Zelensky's mind?

22          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

23          THE CHAIRMAN: Now, the final paragraph on page 10:  
24       "During this same phone call I had with Mr. Morrison, he went  
25       on to describe a conversation Ambassador Sondland had with

1       Mr. Yermak at Warsaw. Ambassador Sondland told Mr. Yermak  
2       that the security assistance money would not come until  
3       President Zelensky committed to pursue the Burisma  
4       investigation." And the Burisma investigation, again, is the  
5       one involving the Bidens.

6               Now, again, I want to ask you about conditionality. If  
7       Mr. Morrison told you that, according to Mr. Sondland, that  
8       Mr. Sondland had communicated to the Ukrainians, to  
9       Mr. Yermak, security assistance money would not come until  
10      President Zelensky committed to pursue the Burisma  
11      investigation, the one is being conditioned on the other, is  
12      it not?

13              AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

14              THE CHAIRMAN: You go on, at the end of that paragraph,  
15       top of page 11: "This was the first time I had heard that  
16       the security assistance -- not just the White House  
17       meeting -- was conditioned on the investigations."

18              So both of these things you now had learned were  
19       conditioned on these two political investigations, right?

20              AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's correct, sir.

21              THE CHAIRMAN: That is, but for the Ukrainians'  
22       willingness to do these two investigations, they were not  
23       only not going to get the White House meeting, they were also  
24       not going to get the military assistance.

25              AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is what Mr. Sondland told

1       Mr. Yermak.

2           THE CHAIRMAN: So that is what's communicated by the  
3       U.S. Ambassador to the EU, charged with a Ukrainian  
4       responsibility to the Ukrainians, about what they have to do  
5       if they want to get the White House meeting and U.S. military  
6       assistance.

7           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The only qualification I would put  
8       on that is that Ambassador Sondland was not the principal  
9       United States representative to Ukraine. Ukraine's not in  
10       the EU. He had this irregular, informal commission from  
11       President Trump based on May 23rd.

12          THE CHAIRMAN: But this is someone, an ambassador --

13          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Ambassador.

14          THE CHAIRMAN: -- high rank --

15          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

16          THE CHAIRMAN: -- having direct communication with the  
17       President --

18          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: He had direct communication with the  
19       President, yes.

20          THE CHAIRMAN: -- and he is communicating to the  
21       Ukrainians that if they don't do these political  
22       investigations that would help Mr. Trump in the next  
23       election, they won't get the meeting with the President and  
24       they won't get military assistance. Is that correct?

25          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's correct.

1                   THE CHAIRMAN: If I can go to the second full paragraph  
2 on page 11 of your testimony.

3                   "Ambassador Sondland also told me that he now recognized  
4 that he had made a mistake by earlier telling the Ukrainian  
5 officials to whom he spoke that a White House meeting with  
6 President Zelensky was dependent on a public announcement of  
7 investigations -- in fact, Ambassador Sondland said,  
8 'everything' was dependent on such an announcement, including  
9 security assistance."

10                  Meaning that he had understated the matter before.. Am I  
11 right?

12                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: He thought it would -- he realized  
13 that it had been a mistake to condition it only on the  
14 meeting.

15                  THE CHAIRMAN: That it was also -- the military  
16 assistance was also going to be conditioned on the commitment  
17 by Ukraine to do these two political investigations.

18                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

19                  THE CHAIRMAN: You go on to say in that paragraph, "He  
20 said" -- he, Ambassador Sondland -- "said that President  
21 Trump wanted President Zelensky 'in a public box' by making a  
22 public statement about ordering such investigations."

23                  By that, do you mean, Ambassador, that President Trump  
24 wanted Zelensky to have to make a public commitment, to get  
25 into a public box -- that is, commit publicly to these two

1       investigations -- before he was going to get either the  
2       meeting or the assistance?

3           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's what Ambassador Sondland told  
4       me.

5           THE CHAIRMAN: So it wasn't even enough that they make a  
6       private commitment; Ambassador Sondland was saying that  
7       Ukraine and President Zelensky needed to make a public  
8       statement for the President.

9           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

10          THE CHAIRMAN: In the next paragraph, you say, "In the  
11       same September 1 call, I told Ambassador Sondland that  
12       President Trump should have more respect for another head of  
13       state and that what he described was not in the interest of  
14       either President Trump or President Zelensky."

15          What did you mean that he should have more respect for  
16       another head of state?

17          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: What Ambassador Sondland was telling  
18       me that President Trump wanted, and, again, presumably based  
19       on a phone call between Ambassador Sondland and President  
20       Trump, was that President Trump wanted a public statement  
21       from President Zelensky. And that struck me to be bad for  
22       both, that it would not turn out well for both.

23          But, in answer to your question, Mr. Chairman, that  
24       would show disrespect to another head of state. If President  
25       Trump is telling you, I want you to go out and publicly say

1       you're going to do this, that was disrespectful, in my view,  
2       to another head of state.

3           THE CHAIRMAN: Disrespectful in the sense that he not  
4       only wanted this illicit bargain but he wanted him to make it  
5       public that he was going to -- in other words, that he  
6       couldn't trust the Ukrainian President to honor a private  
7       commitment to do these two political investigations, he  
8       needed it to be public?

9           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I didn't go that far.

10          THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

11          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I mean, that was not in my mind,  
12       about public/private. It was more the direction from one  
13       President to another President. Two sovereign states having  
14       a conversation, a respectful conversation, you would not have  
15       one telling the other to go out and make a public --

16          THE CHAIRMAN: In the next paragraph -- well, let me  
17       turn to the following page, page 12, of your testimony.

18          The second-to-last paragraph, in the middle of the  
19       paragraph, you testify: "Ambassador Sondland said that he  
20       talked to President Zelensky and Mr. Yermak and told them  
21       that, although this was not a quid pro quo, if President  
22       Zelensky did not 'clear things up' in public, we would be at  
23       a 'stalemate.' I understood a 'stalemate' to mean that  
24       Ukraine would not receive the much-needed military  
25       assistance."

1           So you understood that, unless President Zelensky made  
2        this public statement, they weren't going to get the military  
3        assistance.

4           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

5           THE CHAIRMAN: On page 13, the middle paragraph, you're  
6        talking about the text messages, and you testified: "Before  
7        these text messages, during our call on September 8,  
8        Ambassador Sondland tried to explain to me that President  
9        Trump is a businessman. When a businessman is about to sign  
10       a check to someone who owes him something, he said, the  
11       businessman asks that person to pay up before signing the  
12       check."

13           Now, when Ambassador Sondland described to you this  
14        signing of the check, did you take it by that he was  
15        referring to signing the check for the military assistance?

16           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

17           THE CHAIRMAN: You go on in the next sentence to say,  
18        "Ambassador Volker used the same terms several days later  
19        when we were together at the Yalta European Strategy  
20        Conference."

21           Did he use the same "signing the check" term?

22           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

23           THE CHAIRMAN: Did that strike you as remarkable, that  
24        that same analogy was used by both ambassadors?

25           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No. It struck me -- I concluded

1           that they had had a conversation.

2           THE CHAIRMAN: And that they both understood that if  
3           President Trump was going to sign the check for military  
4           assistance then they needed to pay up first and that pay-up  
5           was a public declaration of these two political  
6           investigations?

7           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That was the parallel.

8           THE CHAIRMAN: You go on to say, "I argued to both that  
9           the explanation made no sense: the Ukrainians did not 'owe'  
10           President Trump anything, and holding up security assistance  
11           for domestic political gain was 'crazy,' as I had said in my  
12           text message."

13           Well, I think that's self-explanatory.

14           I'm going to hand it over to Mr. Noble.

15           Oh, I'm sorry. Oh. Yeah. Okay.

16           Well, actually, I'm happy to go to members, if they  
17           would like to ask some questions.

18           Mr. Quigley.

19           MR. QUIGLEY: Ambassador, at any time did anyone detail  
20           what Mr. Giuliani's role was in Ukraine?

21           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, sir.

22           MR. QUIGLEY: How did you keep aware of his activities?  
23           Did anyone report to you? Did anyone at all tell you what he  
24           was doing? The Ukrainians, for example?

25           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, sir. The work on these

1 investigations, to make commitments to pursue these  
2 investigations, was done by Ambassador Volker and Ambassador  
3 Sondland. What I knew was that Ambassador -- that they both,  
4 to a greater and lesser degree, extent, had conversations  
5 with Mr. Giuliani. I don't know the nature of those  
6 conversations.

7 MR. QUIGLEY: You described, I believe, that there were  
8 divergent functions taking place, official and unofficial,  
9 and the Giuliani roles were unofficial. Had you ever seen,  
10 in all your years working in the field that you do, someone  
11 operate in this manner?

12 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, I have seen  
13 constructive input coming from outside the government into  
14 the government decisionmaking process. In particular -- in  
15 every case, that was to push forward, on trying to find ideas  
16 coming from the outside, to push forward an agreed policy  
17 goal or objective.

18 MR. QUIGLEY: Did they typically work together with the  
19 officials?

20 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: They typically worked together.  
21 That's why you -- yeah.

22 MR. QUIGLEY: They were aware of what each other was  
23 doing --

24 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Absolutely.

25 MR. QUIGLEY: -- and they knew each other's role?

1                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Absolutely. And they can be --  
2 often can be. I mean, there's things called -- at the  
3 Institute of Peace, we do some what we call track two, which  
4 is the unofficial -- track one is the official dialogue  
5 between governments. Track two is unofficial, where you have  
6 former members of the government talking to former members of  
7 another government. And they come up with ideas that they  
8 feed into the track one, to the formal, and they push that  
9 forward. That's common practice.

10                  MR. QUIGLEY: And, finally, did the Ukrainians ever ask  
11 you about his role and what he was doing, or did --

12                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, sir. About Giuliani's role?

13                  MR. QUIGLEY: Right.

14                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, sir.

15                  MR. QUIGLEY: They never talked to you about it?

16                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Not that I recall.

17                  MR. QUIGLEY: Very good. Thank you.

18                  THE CHAIRMAN: I take it from your testimony,  
19 Ambassador, that while there are appropriate cases to have  
20 that second track, where the second track is ultimately  
21 coordinated with the first track, that's not really what  
22 happened here.

23                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, it's unusual. There  
24 was some coordination. Occasionally I would be included in  
25 some of these discussions. I was in the first track, in the

1 regular track, and as you could see from the emails, or the  
2 texts, I was included on some of those. So there was some  
3 coordination among that.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: You know, I guess the more accurate way  
5 to ask the question is, in this actual case, not like prior  
6 track two discussions, the irregular channel came to co-opt  
7 the regular channel in pursuit of an objective that was not  
8 in U.S. interests. Is that fair to say?

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: In one aspect of the regular  
10 channel -- that is, in the security assistance component of  
11 the regular channel. The regular channel is all of our  
12 interactions with Ukraine, and one of the very important  
13 components of that interaction with Ukraine is the security  
14 assistance. And the security assistance got blocked by this  
15 second channel.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, not just the one, because it was  
17 also the meeting, correct?

18 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The meeting as well. Yes, sir. The  
19 meeting as well.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Swalwell.

21 MR. SWALWELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 And thank you, Ambassador.

23 Do you have any reason to believe, Ambassador, that  
24 anytime during your communications with Ambassador Sondland  
25 that Ambassador Sondland misrepresented the directives or

1        intentions of President Trump?

2                    AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No.

3                    MR. SWALWELL: How would you assess the character of  
4                    Ambassador Sondland? You've assessed Mr. Volker's earlier.  
5                    Can you make the same assessment for Ambassador Sondland?

6                    AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I can do facts, you know.

7                    MR. SWALWELL: Based on your facts, how would you assess  
8                    his integrity in this irregular process that you engaged in?

9                    AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I have no reason to believe that he  
10                  was not acting with integrity.

11                  MR. SWALWELL: What was your concern?

12                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: My concern about the whole second  
13                  track was that, apparently at the instigation of  
14                  Mr. Giuliani, Ambassador Sondland and Ambassador Volker were  
15                  conditioning an important component of our assistance on what  
16                  would ultimately be a political action.

17                  MR. SWALWELL: And, Ambassador, you were asked earlier  
18                  about President Trump characterizing this to Ambassador  
19                  Sondland as "no quid pro quo, no quid pro quo." But as you  
20                  described this here, the conditions that were laid out to  
21                  you, at least through Ambassador Sondland relaying President  
22                  Trump's wishes, you're familiar with the phrase, if it looks  
23                  like a duck and it walks like a duck, you can say it's not a  
24                  duck, but it's a duck?

25                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, I can just tell you the

1       facts. You've stated them. That is, apparently,  
2       President -- well, Ambassador Sondland told me many times  
3       that President Trump said it was not a quid pro quo. I  
4       observed that, in order to move forward on the security  
5       assistance, the Ukrainians were told by Ambassador Sondland  
6       that they had to pursue these investigations.

7                    MR. SWALWELL: I was moved by page 8's description of  
8       your trip to Donbas, and I think you included that for a  
9       reason, because you also expressed the concern that 13,000  
10       Ukrainians have been killed in the war.

11                  Can you just talk about the human element here and what  
12       it means to Ukrainians every single day that goes by where we  
13       have authorized aid, they don't see it in their bank account,  
14       and Ukrainians continue to lose their lives, and what that  
15       means for our security and just their livelihood?

16                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, the Ukrainians are  
17       remarkably focused on the casualties in the east.

18                  When Senator Johnson and Senator Murphy visited, about  
19       this time, we had a meeting with the Defense Minister. And  
20       it was the first meeting of the day. We went over there.  
21       They invited us to a ceremony that they have in front of  
22       their ministry every day. Every day, they have this  
23       ceremony. And it's about a half-an-hour ceremony where  
24       soldiers in formation, the Defense Minister, families of  
25       soldiers who have been killed are there.

1           And the selection of which soldiers are honored, which  
2        soldiers who had been killed are honored, is on the date of  
3        it. So whatever today's date is, you know, if we were there  
4        today, on the 22nd of October, the families of those soldiers  
5        who were killed on any 22nd of October in the previous  
6        5 years would be there. And --

7           MR. SWALWELL: Is it fair to say that the sooner they  
8        would have received the aid from the United States, the fewer  
9        the casualties would've been?

10          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: So here's what we could say. This  
11        is -- I don't want to overstate this. Because it wasn't that  
12        the holdup of this particular set of equipment and weapons  
13        and radar and communications and vehicles, that that led to,  
14        the week that I was there or even any particular -- we can't  
15        make that connection.

16          What we can say is that that radar and weapons and  
17        sniper rifles, communication, that saves lives. It makes the  
18        Ukrainians more effective. It might even shorten the war.  
19        That's what our hope is, to show that the Ukrainians can  
20        defend themselves and the Russians, in the end, will say,  
21        "Okay, we're going to stop." It's that saving of life.  
22        That's how we would save lives.

23          MR. SWALWELL: Thank you.

24          Yield back.

25          THE CHAIRMAN: Our time has expired. Forty-five minutes

1 to the minority.

2 BY MR. CASTOR:

3 Q In your statement, on page 2, you mention that,  
4 when you were serving outside of government during the Obama  
5 administration, after the Russian invasion, you joined two  
6 other former Ambassadors to Ukraine in urging the Obama  
7 administration officials at the State Department, Defense  
8 Department, and other agencies to provide lethal defensive  
9 weapons to Ukraine in order to deter further Russian  
10 aggression?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Who were the two other officials?

13 A Ambassador John Herbst and Ambassador Steve Pifer.

14 Q What was the objection to providing lethal  
15 defensive weapons at the time?

16 A The objection was that it might provoke the  
17 Russians.

18 Q But you didn't think that was a good argument?

19 A I didn't. I thought that the Russians had already  
20 been provoked and they had invaded Ukraine.

21 Q Uh-huh.

22 Overall, once you joined, you know, the administration  
23 in Kyiv, were you happy with the package of aid?

24 A I was happy that we were providing aid. It could  
25 always be more. But I was glad it was coming. I would've

1       been very unhappy if it didn't come.

2           Q     But the Trump administration had a package of aid  
3        to the Ukraine --

4           A     Yes.

5           Q     -- including lethal defensive weapons --

6           A     Yes.

7           Q     -- financial assistance --

8           A     I was very happy about that.

9           Q     Okay.

10          A     Yes.

11          Q     And that was an improvement of years prior?

12          A     It was.

13          Q     Was it a substantial improvement?

14          A     It was a substantial improvement, in that this  
15        administration provided Javelin antitank weapons. These are  
16        defensive weapons, and they deter, and I believe successfully  
17        deter, Russians from trying to grab more territory, to push  
18        forward any further tank attack, number one. So there was a  
19        military capability.

20           There was also a very strong political message that said  
21        that the Americans are willing to provide more than blankets.  
22        I mean, that was the previous. And these weapons are serious  
23        weapons. They will kill Russian tanks. So these were  
24        serious weapons. It was a demonstration that we support  
25        Ukraine.

1           Q     Uh-huh. And "the Americans are willing to provide  
2     more than blankets," was that a characterization of the aid  
3     in the prior administration?

4           A     The prior administration had been willing to give  
5     aid, but "blankets" was just kind of the more derogatory  
6     version of it, but it was nonlethal weapons. So there was  
7     communications equipment, there were vehicles, there were  
8     maybe some rations, there were blankets, there were  
9     night-vision goggles. So it was a significant package, but  
10    it stopped short of weapons.

11          Q     On page 5 of your statement, right around the  
12    June 27th-28th timeframe --

13          A     Yes, sir.

14          Q     -- you stated that you sensed something odd when  
15    Ambassador Sondland told me that he did not wish to include  
16    most of the regular interagency participants on the upcoming  
17    call with President Zelensky.

18          A     Correct.

19          Q     Who was excluded from that call?

20          A     At a minimum, his staff in Brussels. It may have  
21    also included people on the Department of Energy staff,  
22    because Secretary Perry was on the call. I don't know  
23    which -- I don't think the State Department -- I don't know.  
24    I don't think State Department was even planning to be on the  
25    call, but I -- which is another question, why would that not

1       be, but that's --

2           Q     Okay.  Was the National Security Council staff on  
3     that call?

4           A     No.

5           Q     Would they ordinarily be on such a call?

6           A     Not necessarily.

7           Q     Okay.

8                 You state that, before President Zelensky joined the  
9     call, Ambassador Volker advised that he planned to meet with  
10   President Zelensky in Toronto on July 2nd and discuss with  
11   President Zelensky, you know, how to position Ukraine for  
12   this White House meeting?

13          A     It was to prepare President Zelensky for the phone  
14   call, which we were trying to schedule, which, in turn,  
15   would've been a step for the meeting -- would've been a step  
16   towards --

17          Q     Okay.

18          A     -- the scheduling of the meeting.  Yes.

19          Q     And did you have a concern about that?

20          A     I didn't.

21          Q     About what Ambassador Volker would say in Canada?

22          A     I didn't have a concern.  As I think I've  
23   mentioned, I didn't, at that time, understand what the code  
24   was for investigations.

25          Q     Uh-huh.

1           A    And I don't even think, at that point -- I don't  
2    think Kurt said anything about investigations on that call or  
3    even on the prep call. So that call, that day, there were  
4    two parts; one was Americans only, and then they introduced  
5    President Zelensky. And it was in the preparatory call with  
6    Americans only that Kurt said he was going to have this  
7    conversation with President Zelensky.

8           Q    Right. But Ambassador --

9           A    And --

10          Q    Oh, I'm sorry.

11          A    No, go ahead.

12          Q    "But Ambassador Volker noted that he would relay  
13    that President Trump wanted to see rule of law, transparency,  
14    but also, specifically, cooperation on investigations to 'get  
15    to the bottom of things.'"

16          A    Good point. You're exactly right. So I stand  
17    corrected. He did mention investigations --

18          Q    Okay.

19          A    -- in that prep part.

20          Q    And he indicated that this would be a topic in  
21    Toronto in a couple days. Is that correct?

22          A    In about 3 days, yes.

23          Q    And did you have any concerns about that?

24          A    I didn't. As I say, I didn't know what  
25    "investigations" referred to at this point.

1 Q Okay.

2 A You know, I was starting to get suspicious.

3 Q Okay. But once President Zelensky joined the call,  
4 there was no discussion of that?

5 A There was not.

6 Q At the top of page 6, you state you reported on  
7 this call to Deputy Assistant Secretary Kent and you wrote a  
8 memo for the record dated June 30th that summarized the  
9 Zelensky call?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Did the memo you prepared have anything in it about  
12 the pre-call?

13 A No.

14 Q Okay. Did you communicate with Kent anything about  
15 the pre-call?

16 A I don't think so. I don't think so. I'm not  
17 100 percent sure.

18 Q Now, did he ask you to write the memo or --

19 A He suggested that I write the memo.

20 So this is on the 30th of June. I got there on the 17th  
21 of June. I'd had a previous call on the 18th of June when I  
22 first arrived, and then there was this.

23 So I was, as I said in the testimony, realizing that  
24 there are these two channels. At the time, I thought it was  
25 beneficial -- benign or even beneficial to have these two,

1 because they could reinforce each other, or one could at  
2 least support the other.

3 But I thought it was -- it struck me -- the reason I  
4 wanted to be sure that Deputy Assistant Secretary George Kent  
5 knew about it was he's clearly and solely in the official  
6 channel, the normal channel.

7 It wasn't at all clear to me from that phone call that  
8 anyone from the State Department, the normal channel, as you  
9 just pointed out -- no State, no NSC -- was on the call. I  
10 just wanted to be sure that they knew that this other one was  
11 going on. It could still be benign or even beneficial, but  
12 it just seemed to me that there ought to be knowledge of the  
13 two.

14 Q Okay. And so you discussed that with Kent?

15 A I did.

16 Q Do you remember what he said to you?

17 A I just remember him saying two things. One is, you  
18 better write it down --

19 Q Okay.

20 A -- which I did. And two, he said, Bill, I'm glad  
21 you're out there, I'm glad that you're there, that you can be  
22 the link between these two what we're now calling channels.

23 Q Okay.

24 So did you write the memo about the call but also the  
25 pre-call?

1           A     I wrote the memo about the call. I'll have to go  
2     back and look at --

3           Q     Okay.

4           A     So the memo is in the documents that I submitted to  
5     the State Department, so they will be available sooner or  
6     later to you.

7           Q     Possibly later.

8           A     This is up to Secretary Pompeo.

9           THE CHAIRMAN: We're hoping sooner.

10           BY MR. CASTOR:

11           Q     By mid-July, you write, it was becoming clear that  
12     the meeting with Zelensky was conditioned on the  
13     investigations of Burisma and alleged Ukrainian interference  
14     in the 2016 elections.

15           MR. SMITH: Which page, again, was that?

16           MR. CASTOR: It's the very next paragraph.

17           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yeah. Yeah.

18           BY MR. CASTOR:

19           Q     And so my question is, what happened in between  
20     that time period?

21           A     So, actually, what I meant to imply -- what I meant  
22     to suggest was that, right after -- by mid-July, it was  
23     becoming clear. And so, on the two paragraphs to follow  
24     that, Mr. Castor, I tried to describe what led me to make  
25     it -- why it was becoming clear to me that that was the case.

1           Q    Uh-huh.

2           A    And that is the -- oh, I'm sorry. I've gone now to  
3   page --

4           Q    We're on page 6.

5           A    You're on page 6, but I've jumped in order to  
6   answer that question about why mid-July. It's on the 19th.  
7   You have to skip ahead until we get to the paragraph that  
8   starts, "In the same July 19 phone call," which on yours is  
9   on page 7 in the middle.

10           This is a readout of the July 10th meeting, where you  
11   had Danyliuk and Yermak, Bolton, Sondland, Volker.

12           Q    Right.

13           A    And it's at that one where Sondland connected  
14   investigations to an Oval Office meeting, Bolton walked out.

15           Q    And you learned that from Fiona Hill?

16           A    And Alex Vindman, yes.

17           Q    Okay. How frequently did you speak with Hill and  
18   Vindman? Was it on an as-needed basis --

19           A    Yes.

20           Q    -- or was it a regular schedule?

21           A    No. As needed.

22           Q    Okay. Any idea why it took so long for the time  
23   period between the 10th and the 19th?

24           A    The reason -- I remember it well about the 19th.  
25   The 18th was the NSC meeting where the hold on security

1 assistance was first --

2 Q Okay.

3 A -- broached. Troubling. I called these two NSC  
4 people the next day. And on that one, they gave me the  
5 readout of the July 10th.

6 Q Had you received a readout from Volker about the  
7 meeting?

8 A About the July 10th meeting?

9 Q Yeah.

10 A I don't think so.

11 Q Okay.

12 A Yeah. I'll have to check my notes.

13 Q Have you ever had a readout from Volker about what  
14 happened in the July 10 meeting? Or is your only information  
15 coming from Dr. Hill and Lieutenant Colonel Vindman?

16 A It might just be from that source of information.

17 I don't remember having a conversation --

18 Q Okay.

19 A -- about these other ones. Danyliuk was,  
20 obviously, in that meeting. Yermak was in that meeting. And  
21 I've had multiple conversations with them, more often than,  
22 actually, with --

23 Q Did anyone relate to you that Danyliuk was getting  
24 way into the weeds with Ambassador Bolton and it was not a  
25 long meeting in --

1           A     No, no. Actually, it was -- no. What I heard from  
2     Vindman and Hill was that the first part of that meeting went  
3     well. Substantive discussions: security, national security,  
4     both sides, energy security.

5           And, apparently, according to them, their boss, John  
6     Bolton was appreciating the substance of that meeting. And,  
7     in their description, when Ambassador Sondland raised  
8     investigations in the meeting, that triggered Ambassador  
9     Bolton's antenna, political antenna, and he said, we don't do  
10    politics here.

11           Q     Uh-huh.

12           A     And so he ended the meeting.

13           Q     Okay. Did anyone provide you a readout that  
14     Danyliuk was talking about establishing new types of  
15     institutions in the Ukrainian Government?

16           A     I don't remember that.

17           Q     Okay.

18           A     No.

19           Q     And so no one related to you that Danyliuk was  
20     getting into the weeds with Bolton?

21           A     No.

22           Q     On July 10th -- going back to the paragraph on  
23     page 6 beginning with, "On July 10" --

24           A     Yes.

25           Q     -- you met with Zelensky's Chief of Staff and

1       then-foreign policy advisor, who had advised you they had  
2       heard from Mr. Giuliani?

3           A       Ah. Yes. This is the one where I mentioned that  
4       they had heard this via -- they had heard from Giuliani via  
5       the Prosecutor General Lutsenko.

6           Q       Okay. And you relayed your concerns to Counselor  
7       Brechbuhl?

8           A       Brechbuhl. That's correct.

9           Q       What was his feedback?

10          A       Again, the Counselor to the Secretary is focused a  
11       lot -- I won't say mainly, but focused a lot -- on personnel  
12       issues. And yet it was he who -- I had two meetings with  
13       him, one just before the one with the Secretary in May. And  
14       it was he who said, "Look, Bill, call me anytime if you've  
15       got questions or problems. I can check with the Secretary  
16       and" -- so that's why I called him.

17          Q       So he is someone who had great influence with the  
18       Secretary, right?

19          A       He is very close -- he and the Secretary go back a  
20       long ways.

21          Q       Okay. So if you, you know, communicated your  
22       concerns to Brechbuhl --

23          A       Yes.

24          Q       -- on July 10th --

25          A       Yes.

1           Q    -- wasn't that, in effect, a signal that your  
2 concerns before you took the post were coming to fruition?

3           A    Yes.

4           Q    Okay. And did Brechbuhl have a -- did he recognize  
5 that? And did he realize that this was part of having your  
6 back and --

7           A    He did. He did.

8           Q    -- the other commitments that were made to you?

9           A    And I think I talked to him a couple of times along  
10 these lines. And, again, it comes up when we talk about the  
11 security assistance. You know, I called him that time as  
12 well. He said he would check. So he was responsive. It  
13 wasn't in his area of -- he didn't do this day-to-day. So he  
14 had to talk to other people about -- other people in the  
15 State Department about this.

16          Q    And then the next event --

17          MR. JORDAN: Can I jump in for just a second?

18          MR. CASTOR: Sure.

19          MR. JORDAN: I want to go back to the July 19th call you  
20 had with Dr. Hill and Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. You said,  
21 Ambassador, you initiated that call?

22          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, I think so. I know it  
23 was on my -- I remember seeing it on the schedule. So,  
24 again, the troubling NSC meeting was the 18th.

25          MR. JORDAN: Understood.

1                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: And the 19th, it may have been a  
2 prescheduled call. I can't remember if I initiated it or  
3 not. Was that the question?

4                   MR. JORDAN: If it was prescheduled with the NSC, would  
5 Dr. Hill or Mr. Vindman have scheduled that call with you?  
6 Who would've scheduled that?

7                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I can't remember who did it.

8                   MR. JORDAN: You get to Ukraine on June 17th. Is that  
9 right?

10                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

11                  MR. JORDAN: All right. So you're there 1 month.  
12 June 17th and July 19th, how many conversations did you have  
13 with Dr. Hill and/or Lieutenant Colonel Vindman in that month  
14 time period?

15                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: This might have been the first one.

16                  MR. JORDAN: This is the first one?

17                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: This could have been the first one.

18                  MR. JORDAN: And you don't know who initiated it?

19                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The only reason I'm hesitating -- I  
20 know that I was concerned about the 18th call.

21                  MR. JORDAN: I understand.

22                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: And they were on that.

23                  MR. JORDAN: Okay.

24                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: And I know that it was actually on  
25 my schedule. Sometimes -- well, I remember seeing it on the

1 schedule. So sometimes when there's kind of a  
2 spur-of-the-moment call it doesn't show up on my schedule.  
3 But this was on my schedule. So it was scheduled to happen  
4 the following day. I can't remember if it had been  
5 previously scheduled and I just took advantage of it or if I  
6 scheduled it right then because I wanted to talk about the  
7 18th meeting.

8 MR. JORDAN: If it had been previously scheduled, do you  
9 know why it would've been previously scheduled?

10 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't.

11 MR. JORDAN: Okay. So would you guess it originated  
12 with the NSC calling you?

13 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I can't speculate. I can't  
14 remember.

15 MR. JORDAN: Okay. But this is the only call you've had  
16 with him in the month that you've been there as Ambassador?

17 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I think that's correct.

18 MR. JORDAN: And just to go back where our counselor  
19 was, it was both about your concerns that you had learned the  
20 day before, relative to security assistance dollars --

21 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

22 MR. JORDAN: -- and then they volunteered to tell you  
23 about their July 10th meeting, right?

24 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

25 MR. JORDAN: And did you talk to them about your

1       July 10th meeting in Ukraine with the individuals you had met  
2       with, Mr. Zelensky's Chief of Staff? Did you fill him in on  
3       that as well?

4           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't think I did.

5           MR. JORDAN: Is it fair to say the bulk of the  
6       conversation was Dr. Hill and Lieutenant Colonel Vindman  
7       relating to you what happened at the July 10th meeting here  
8       in the United States?

9           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The first part of the conversation  
10      was about what we had all heard the day before --

11           MR. JORDAN: Okay.

12           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: -- about this security assistance  
13      being held up. And none of the three of us had any idea why.

14           MR. JORDAN: Okay.

15           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: And then they went into this other  
16      discussion about the July 10th meeting.

17           MR. JORDAN: Okay. Any idea which took the bulk of the  
18      time of the phone call?

19           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm sure the July 10th -- discussion  
20      of the July 10th meeting took the bulk of the call.

21           MR. JORDAN: The bulk of the time was on this meeting  
22      that took place at the White House.

23           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

24           MR. JORDAN: Okay.

25           Steve, thank you.

1 [3:05 p.m.]

2 BY MR. CASTOR:

3 Q During this time period, did Volker ever talk to  
4 you about his view of whether the aid would be released?

5 A Yes, I can't remember specific conversations, but I  
6 remember we had conversations, and we all agreed that it  
7 would be released. We were all sure it would be released.  
8 The fact is we want -- we were hoping that it would be  
9 resolved, released, decided, reversed, lifted, whatever the  
10 verb is, before the Ukrainians heard about it because we  
11 didn't want to be in the position I found myself later on  
12 being embarrassed and not be able to say. So we hoped that  
13 it would be fixed, and they would never hear about it, and we  
14 wouldn't have to explain.

15 Q And from time to time, this happens with aid. It  
16 gets held up, right?

17 A Sometimes aid gets held up. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

18 Q For whatever reason?

19 A Mr. Castor, I don't know. So I've been in the aid  
20 business for a long time.

21 Q I mean, you know you can snicker about this, but --

22 A No, no, no, I'm not.

23 Q You're not snickering at this. Let me be clear,  
24 you're not snickering. But it's been related to us that this  
25 happens from time to time. Aid gets held up for whatever

1        reason --

2            A     So I'm trying to -- Mr. Castor, I've done a bunch  
3        of aid stuff as I mentioned here. Aid can be held up when,  
4        you know, if there is a CR or something, you know, if there's  
5        a congressional -- it could be a congressional hold. Yes, so  
6        there are instances that aid gets held up.

7            Q     Okay. But in this instance, everyone was aligned  
8        you thought that we ought to work through this and the aid  
9        will be lift -- the hold will be lifted.

10          A     Because I was convinced, and all indications were  
11        that everyone in the interagency community that had anything  
12        to do with this aid was in support of that aid flowing.

13          Q     And bipartisan Members of Congress?

14          A     And bipartisan Members of Congress.

15          Q     And, ultimately, the hold was lifted, right?

16          A     And, ultimately, the hold was lifted on the 11th of  
17        September.

18          Q     In total, the Ukrainians knew about this for what  
19        about 10 days?

20          A     They knew that there was a hold on the 29th, and  
21        they knew it was lifted on the 11th of September.

22          Q     Twelve days?

23          A     [Nonverbal response.]

24          During that time, I got a lot of questions about it.

25          Q     Fair enough. During the July 19th call, was it

1       discussed the status of the upcoming call between the  
2       Presidents? There was a July 25th call between President  
3       Trump and Zelensky that's attracted some attention?

4           A     You're talking about with Fiona Hill and Alex  
5       Vindman?

6           Q     Right.

7           A     I don't recall. I don't think so. I think  
8       actually I could check my text messages. Scheduling that  
9       call was a challenge.

10          Q     Okay.

11          A     And it went back and forth in terms of time. So I  
12       don't think I had a conversation with Vindman and Hill about  
13       that at that point.

14          Q     What was NSC's position on the call?

15          A     They opposed it.

16          Q     Okay. And so Dr. Hill opposed it?

17          A     Certainly her boss opposed it.

18          Q     So Ambassador Bolton opposed the call?

19          A     He did.

20          Q     Okay?

21          A     And that was clear from the July 10th meeting.

22          Q     So whoever set up the call --

23          A     Yes.

24          Q     -- it wasn't Ambassador Bolton, right?

25          A     I think that's right.

1           Q     So you didn't know anything about the call on the  
2     19th, and then it was scheduled on the 25th?

3           A     You say I didn't know about the call? I --

4           Q     You were talking to Fiona Hill. I'm going back to  
5     the 19th?

6           A     Yeah, yeah.

7           Q     You're on the phone with Dr. Hill and Lieutenant  
8     Colonel Vindman?

9           A     And we were talking about two things.

10          Q     Two things.

11          A     We were talking about why this assistance was put  
12     on the day before, and we're talking about -- and they are  
13     relating the discussion of July 10th with Danyliuk and  
14     Bolton.

15          Q     Right.

16          A     And the call was not yet locked in, scheduled.

17          Q     Okay.

18          A     And it was going back and forth -- there was some  
19     talk. There was some -- as I recall, there was, you know --  
20     it was on and off, the call's on, the call's off. It is  
21     scheduled for here. Not going to happen. I could go back  
22     through the records if you want.

23          Q     Okay. To the extent that you can recall --

24          A     Yes.

25          Q     -- when did you then learn that this July 25th call

1       would be scheduled?

2           A    I -- well, we were trying to schedule it for about  
3       a week in advance, that whole week. As I say, back and  
4       forth, yes, no, this time, that time. So that was -- I was  
5       doing it on the Ukrainian side and trying to go back to the  
6       -- trying to keep the NSC advised as to what was going on.  
7       And I think it was kind of -- it may have been about the day  
8       before that it was actually locked down, so about the 24th.

9           Q    Okay. And did you find out why --

10          A    Why?

11          Q    -- the change.

12          A    No. As you just made the point, Ambassador Bolton  
13       was not interested in having -- did not want to have the call  
14       because he thought it was going to be a disaster. He thought  
15       that there could be some talk of investigations or worse on  
16       the call. Turned out he was right. So he didn't want to  
17       have the call. I think it was the Chief of Staff who helped  
18       schedule that call.

19          Q    Mr. Mulvaney?

20          A    Mr. Mulvaney.

21          Q    Okay. Do you remember when you finally found out  
22       that the call was happening and you had to go alert the  
23       Ukrainians?

24          A    We were alerting the Ukrainians back and forth. We  
25       had given them a couple of head fakes all the way through

1       about this is going to happen; this is not going to happen.  
2       And probably the day before. Now the other thing is the  
3       White House situation room can work directly with the  
4       Ukrainians as well. Most of the time, they would come  
5       through me, and I would kind of set the stage. But when it  
6       gets to the actual final hours of its schedule, they will --  
7       they can call directly to the Ukrainians.

8           Q       Okay. Also, on the July 19th call, Dr. Hill  
9       informed you that Volker had met with Giuliani to discuss  
10      Ukraine?

11       A       Yes.

12       Q       Was that the first time that you knew Volker and  
13      Giuliani were talking about?

14       A       You know, Mr. Castor it was about that time -- I  
15      was looking at my notes last night or the night before -- it  
16      was about that time that I heard from Dr. Hill that Kurt  
17      mentioned -- Kurt sends a text that I have to check to see if  
18      I was on, but in some text that Kurt sent about this time, he  
19      said: I had a good breakfast with Mr. Giuliani. Maybe you  
20      have already pointed this out earlier today. Was that right?  
21      It was in one of your test --

22       Q       I don't think I pointed that out, but fair enough.

23       A       So, so here's what I know. Ambassador Volker sent  
24      that text to at least Ambassador Sondland and maybe -- maybe  
25      the three-way -- I can't remember.

1           Q     Uh-huh.

2           A     But he said, had a good breakfast with Mr.  
3     Giuliani. And oh, then he also -- I think I was not on this  
4     one, but I've seen it in some document that says that had  
5     Kurt's note back to Rudy Giuliani saying: Thanks for the  
6     good breakfast and had a good time.

7           So it was about that same time. And I think that's the  
8     same contact that Fiona Hill was talking about, about the  
9     same time.

10          Q     Okay. Did you have any direct conversations with  
11     Volker about that or just the text?

12          A     The text that I think I was asked and I didn't get  
13     a response.

14          Q     Okay. So you never had any idea what Volker was  
15     communicating to Giuliani?

16          A     Correct.

17          Q     Also, on July 20th, which is the next day, you sent  
18     or you had a phone conversation with Danyliuk where the  
19     discussion of being a pawn had come up.

20          A     Yes.

21          Q     Did you communicate that concern to anybody, such  
22     as Brechbuhl or Kent?

23          A     I did it -- I expressed the concern to Volker and  
24     Sondland, as I said here. I don't recall going to Brechbuhl  
25     or Kent.

1                   Q     Okay. But that would have been another fact -- if  
2 you had gone to Brechbuhl, that would have been another fact  
3 that pointed to the concerns that you discussed before you  
4 took the post?

5                   A     Yeah. The whole thrust of this irregular channel  
6 was to get these investigations, which Danyliuk and  
7 presumably Zelensky were resisting because they didn't want  
8 to be seen to be interfering but also to be a pawn.

9                   Q     Right.

10                  A     Right.

11                  Q     But you said the irregular channel is -- it  
12 happens.

13                  A     It does.

14                  Q     And it can be okay?

15                  A     It can be okay. It can be helpful. In this  
16 case -- yeah.

17                  Q     But at some point, the irregular channel in your  
18 view became a problem?

19                  A     It did.

20                  Q     And you had the facts from Fiona Hill and Volker  
21 and that side, and then now you're getting the facts from the  
22 Ukraine side?

23                  A     Correct.

24                  Q     And I'm wondering, at this point, did it crystalize  
25 to you that the irregular path was going to be more of a

1       concern than you anticipated?

2           A     Yes. The general way I have described it is,  
3                   during the month of July, it began to be clear --

4           Q     Okay.

5           A     -- that this was a problem.

6           Q     Did you -- I know you sent the cable on the 29th  
7                   after you spoke with Ambassador Bolton, but at any point in  
8                   time between the 20th and learning that, did you have any  
9                   official State Department higher up discussions?

10           MR. GOLDMAN: Can you clarify 20th and 29th, which?

11           MR. CASTOR: July. Do you follow?

12           MR. GOLDMAN: I don't think there was a cable on July  
13                   29th.

14           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: August 29th.

15           MR. CASTOR: August 29th.

16           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Which makes your point?

17           BY MR. CASTOR:

18           Q     So this is what I'm getting to, is, what did you do  
19                   between now and the 29th to alert Mr. -- Counselor Brechbuhl  
20                   or Kent or somebody that this is becoming a problem, this is  
21                   irregular?

22           A     So before the cable -- so August when it was  
23                   becoming -- July, I started to identify the problem of the  
24                   second channel, in particular with regard to the meeting. So  
25                   then the assistance gets put on hold, and that gets to be --

1       goes a month, goes from July 18th into the middle of August  
2       and still is not resolved. It is attempting to be resolved,  
3       and there were descriptions to me from Tim Morrison of how  
4       they tried to get the principals in the same room, couldn't  
5       do it, schedules, et cetera. I then -- I did, I called  
6       Counselor Brechbuhl, talked to John Bolton --

7       Q     This is much later.

8       A     This is in August.

9       Q     Okay.

10      A     This is in August.

11      Q     I'm just -- after the, you know, it seems like the  
12     July 20th communication you had with Danyliuk really  
13     crystalized that this was also becoming a concern on the  
14     Ukrainian side of things.

15      A     It was a concern on the Ukrainian side.

16      Q     And I'm just wondering if you did anything right  
17     then and there other than Sondland, Volker channel?

18      A     I will check again.

19      Q     Okay. And then the July 25th call happens.

20      A     Yes.

21      Q     Who did you get a readout from about the July 25th  
22     call?

23      A     Three people. One was a very short message from  
24     Danyliuk, which said: Went well. Oh, there was also the  
25     Ukrainians put out -- the Ukrainian Office of the President

1       put out a short description. Turned out, looking back on it,  
2       that's not a bad one because it talks about corruption and  
3       working on corruption would improve relations and that kind  
4       of thing, and then kind of normal working -- so that was  
5       that.

6           Tim Morrison and I had a conversation on the 28th. So  
7       that was, what, 3 days later. And he had -- this is one  
8       where he said, "It could've gone better," or something. I  
9       took it as a sarcastic comment: It could have gone better.

10          And then he described several of the things that  
11       happened on that call. He mentioned that Giuliani came up in  
12       the call. He mentioned that he -- he mentioned that Gordon  
13       Sondland had talked to President Trump before and after the  
14       call. So that was not in the call, but that was before and  
15       after, he told me. And he mentioned that the so-called  
16       previous Ambassador, Ambassador Yovanovitch, was a topic of  
17       the call.

18          Q       Okay.

19          A       So there was that.

20          I got one other readout of the call and this was from  
21       George Kent. And his was secondhand. So George Kent had  
22       talked to Alex Vindman, who had been on the call. So George  
23       hadn't been; Alex had.

24          Q       Was Morrison on the call?

25          A       I'm sorry, who?

1                   Q     Was Morrison on the call?

2                   A     I think so, yes, yes. I'm sure he was. Yes, the answer is yes.

4                   George was not. George talked to Alex Vindman, and  
5     George then relayed Alex's comments to me. There was a  
6     difference in their two readouts of the call in one specific  
7     respect, and that is Tim Morrison was sure that President  
8     Trump had asked President Zelensky to fire prosecutor general  
9     Lutsenko. Lutsenko was still on the job because he had -- he  
10    had to stay on the job until Rada takes him off, so he was  
11    still on the job. And Giuliani, we know, wanted to keep  
12    Lutsenko on the job out there. And Tim Morrison's  
13    recollection or recounting of the call was that President  
14    Trump asked President Zelensky to fire Lutsenko. Vindman to  
15    Kent to me said the opposite, that is, that President Trump  
16    said, "Keep Lutsenko," again because Lutsenko and Giuliani  
17    were -- so that actually -- and that turned out to be the  
18    case. We now know, going back to the transcript we saw on  
19    September 25th, we know -- we think, it is a little bit  
20    unclear on that transcript, but we're pretty sure that  
21    President Trump in the transcript asked President Zelensky to  
22    keep -- it said, I understand you fired or you're about to  
23    fire or you're not going to keep this very good prosecutor  
24    general, and we think that's a mistake. So it turns out that  
25    the Vindman description of that aspect was the correct one,

1 and Tim Morrison actually got that one wrong.

2 Q Okay. So you spoke with Morrison and Vindman.

3 A I spoke to Kent, who had talked to Vindman.

4 Q Okay. Anybody else?

5 A And Danyliuk and the report from the --

6 Q Anybody else before the matter became public at the  
7 end of September?

8 A No.

9 Q Okay. So that's sort of the roster of --

10 A That's the roster of reports.

11 MR. CASTOR: I'm at my -- there's about 10 minutes left.  
12 I'd like to pivot to our members.

13 MR. ZELDIN: Ambassador Taylor, on page 9, the second  
14 paragraph.

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, I'm sorry. Which page?

16 MR. ZELDIN: Page 9 of your opening statement, where you  
17 discuss Mr. Yermak asking the United States to submit an  
18 official request for an investigation into Burisma's alleged  
19 violations of Ukrainian law.

20 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

21 MR. ZELDIN: Was that request ever made by the United  
22 States?

23 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, not to my knowledge.

24 MR. ZELDIN: On page 10 of your opening statement, so  
25 second paragraph from the bottom in the middle of the

1       paragraph, you say, quote, "I was hopeful that at the  
2       bilateral meeting or shortly thereafter, the White House  
3       would lift the hold, but this was not to be." The hold was  
4       released just 10 days later, correct?

5           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

6           MR. ZELDIN: Also, on page 10, same paragraph at the  
7       bottom you say, quote, "The Vice President did say that  
8       President Trump wanted the Europeans to do more to support  
9       Ukraine and that he wanted the Ukrainians to do more to fight  
10       corruption," end quote. Doesn't that align with U.S. law and  
11       policy what the Vice President stated?

12          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It does. And as I understand it,  
13       Congressman, when President Trump decided not to go to Warsaw  
14       and ask Vice President Pence to go for him, President Trump  
15       asked Vice President Pence to make those two points.

16          MR. ZELDIN: Which, as you just stated, is entirely  
17       consistent with U.S. law and policy, correct?

18          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes. We want the Europeans to do  
19       more for Ukraine, and we want them -- the Ukrainians -- to do  
20       more to fight corruption.

21          MR. ZELDIN: And on page 11, the third paragraph down,  
22       you say, quote: In fact, Ambassador Sondland said, quote,  
23       "everything" was dependent on such an announcement, including  
24       security assistance.

25           Ukraine never made such an announcement, correct?

1                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's correct.

2                   MR. ZELDIN: And the hold was still released just 10  
3 days later, correct?

4                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct.

5                   MR. ZELDIN: On page 12, first paragraph, on September  
6 5th, I hosted Senators Johnson and Murphy for a visit to  
7 Kyiv. During that meeting, did President Zelensky say  
8 anything to Senators Johnson and Murphy about a quid pro quo?

9                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, sir.

10                  MR. ZELDIN: Did you say anything to Senators Johnson  
11 and Murphy about a quid pro quo?

12                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, sir.

13                  MR. ZELDIN: On page 12, the middle paragraph, you  
14 talked about a conversation with Mr. Morrison. And this  
15 phone call, was Morrison on that call?

16                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, that's a good question.  
17 I don't know what -- I don't know how he knew that. It was  
18 the same -- then, in the next paragraph, Ambassador Sondland  
19 told me that he had a conversation with President Trump. And  
20 so I -- and I think they were talking about the same  
21 conversation. I think those two paragraphs talk about the  
22 same conversation. And I don't know how Tim Morrison --  
23 unless he may have been on the call, or he may have talked to  
24 Sondland after the call.

25                  MR. ZELDIN: I might get back to that, but at the bottom

1       of page 12 and the bottom of page 13 as well, so I'm skipping  
2       ahead to the bottom of page 13, it says, again, I asked  
3       Mr. Danyliuk to confirm that there would be no CNN interview,  
4       which he did. It seems throughout your opening statement  
5       you're talking about this demand for a public statement in  
6       order to release aid to Ukraine, but no announcement was ever  
7       made and the aid was still released, right?

8                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's correct.

9                   MR. ZELDIN: Earlier on, you had an exchange with the  
10       chairman. He asked you with regards to the legal definition  
11       of the term "quid pro quo." I believe you said something to  
12       the effect of "I don't speak Latin," correct?

13                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Sorry.

14                  MR. ZELDIN: Correct.

15                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

16                  MR. ZELDIN: In your opening statement, though, you do  
17       use the words "quid pro quo."

18                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I only quote other people using  
19       those words, Congressman.

20                  MR. ZELDIN: Okay. At the very end of your opening  
21       statement, you do make a reference to quid pro quo as one of  
22       the two Ukraine stories. On page 14 --

23                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Ah, I do, yes, sir.

24                  MR. ZELDIN: So it's an important question for us to ask  
25       you, if you're going to use that term "quid pro quo," for us

1 to ask you what you mean by it, and we're not going to --  
2 obviously, we wouldn't accept the answer that you don't speak  
3 Latin. We want to know what you mean about it. I'll let  
4 Mr. Ratcliffe get into that further with you.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's take a 5- or 10-minute break, and  
6 then we'll resume.

7 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Sure.

8 [Recess.]

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1                   [4:45 p.m.]

2                   THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Let's go back on the record.

3                   Folks, settle down a bit. Let's go back on the record.

4                   Just a few follow-up questions before I hand it over to  
5                   Mr. Noble, Ambassador.

6                   My colleagues on the minority asked you about general  
7                   circumstances in which aid may be withheld, that this kind of  
8                   thing happens. So I want to ask you a little further about  
9                   that.

10                  There are certainly legitimate occasions when aid is  
11                  withheld, such as when Congress decides in its policy  
12                  judgment to withhold aid. Am I right.

13                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

14                  THE CHAIRMAN: And there may be other circumstances,  
15                  changing conditions on the ground somewhere, where a decision  
16                  will be made to withhold aid, appropriately so, correct?

17                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

18                  THE CHAIRMAN: But you can distinguish between  
19                  appropriate circumstances in which aid is withheld and  
20                  illegitimate circumstances in which aid is withheld to coerce  
21                  another country to do something improper.

22                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: You can.

23                  THE CHAIRMAN: Now, my colleagues asked you, well,  
24                  ultimately the aid was released. I think the thinking is no,  
25                  you know, no harm no foul, it ultimately was released. But

1 at the time that it was released are you aware that the White  
2 House was in possession of a whistleblower complaint -- now  
3 public -- that alleged that the assistance may be withheld  
4 for reasons of wanting leverage over Ukraine for political  
5 investigations? Were you aware that at the time it was  
6 released the White House already knew the existence of this  
7 complaint?

8 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I don't know that.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Were you aware at the time that it was --  
10 the aid was released that in fact there were public reports  
11 in newspapers that the aid may be withheld for this improper  
12 reason?

13 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: When it was released, on September  
14 11th, when it was released?

15 THE CHAIRMAN: When the aid was eventually released --

16 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Right.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: -- were you aware there were already  
18 public reports suggesting perhaps that it was being withheld  
19 for inappropriate or inexplicable reasons?

20 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: In the press? I don't recall.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

22 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't recall.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: And we'll check the timeline. That's my  
24 recollection, but I could be wrong.

25 So if I can go back to your testimony. At the bottom of

1       page 10 you talk about a phone call you had with Mr. Morrison  
2       in which "he went on to describe a conversation Ambassador  
3       Sondland had with Mr. Yermak at Warsaw. Ambassador Sondland  
4       told Mr. Yermak that the security assistance money would not  
5       come until President Zelensky committed to pursue the Burisma  
6       investigation. I was alarmed by what Mr. Morrison told me  
7       about the Sondland-Yermak conversation. This is the first  
8       time I had heard the security assistance -- not just the  
9       White House meeting -- was conditioned on the  
10      investigations."

11           At that point did you understand that unless the  
12       Ukrainians did this for President Trump, that is committed to  
13       these investigations, they were not going to get that  
14       military assistance or that meeting?

15           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, what I know for sure  
16       is what Mr. Morrison told me that he must have heard  
17       Ambassador Sondland tell Mr. Yermak. And as I said, this was  
18       the first time I'd heard those two put together, those  
19       connected.

20           THE CHAIRMAN: And when you say that, this was the first  
21       time I heard that the security assistance -- not just the  
22       White House meeting -- was conditioned on the investigation,  
23       when you talk about conditioned, did you mean that if they  
24       didn't do this, the investigations, they weren't going to get  
25       that, the meeting and the military assistance?

1                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That was my clear understanding,  
2 security assistance money would not come until the President  
3 committed to pursue the investigation.

4                   THE CHAIRMAN: So if they don't do this, they are not  
5 going to get that was your understanding?

6                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

7                   THE CHAIRMAN: Are you aware that quid pro quo literally  
8 means this for that?

9                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I am.

10                  THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Noble.

11                  BY MR. NOBLE:

12                  Q     Thank you. Thank you, Chairman.

13                  Ambassador, just sticking in this same general  
14 timeframe, still on page 10 of your statement, on September  
15 1st you wrote that you had a conversation with Mr. Danyliuk  
16 to let him know that the delay of the U.S. security  
17 assistance was a, quote, "all or nothing proposition, in the  
18 sense that if the White House did not lift the hold prior to  
19 the end of the fiscal year, September 30th, the funds would  
20 expire and Ukraine would receive nothing."

21                  How did Mr. Danyliuk respond when you told him that?

22                  A     Mr. Noble, the reason I told him that, the reason I  
23 made it clear that it was all or nothing, was that he had  
24 sent me an earlier note, a note just before that, saying,  
25 well, it's a gradually increasing problem, that we're

1           gradually missing out on this assistance.

2           And I wrote back and said, no, Alexander -- Sasha --  
3           Mr. Danyliuk, if the hold is not lifted, in particular by the  
4           end of the fiscal year, then it goes away. And he was  
5           thinking that it was just kind of -- it would be dribbled  
6           out.

7           So in answer to your question, did he respond, nothing  
8           substantive. I mean, he may have said thank you or  
9           something.

10          Q        Subsequently, though, did you have conversations  
11           with the Ukrainians? I mean, did they become increasingly  
12           concerned when the freeze remained in place and they weren't  
13           getting an explanation why, and you had told that them these  
14           funds may evaporate completely?

15          A        Yes. And they -- I may have mentioned this  
16           already, I can't remember -- they could not understand why it  
17           was being held. And they suggested, well, maybe if I just go  
18           to Washington and convince the President or convince the  
19           Secretary of Defense that this is important that that would  
20           do the trick. They were trying to figure out why this was  
21           being held.

22          Q        But then at some point, and again later on page 10,  
23           Ambassador Sondland, it appears, told Mr. Yermak, President  
24           Zelensky's adviser, that the money would not come until  
25           Zelensky committed to pursuing the Burisma investigation. Is

1       that right?

2           A    That is correct.

3           Q    So, I mean, did the Ukrainians have an  
4        understanding at that point what they had to do in order to  
5        get the funds released?

6           A    Certainly Mr. Yermak did. That's what he had heard  
7        from Ambassador Sondland.

8           Q    Okay. I want to go back now to the first time you,  
9        I believe, learned of the freeze. Was that during the July  
10       18th SVTC --

11          A    It was.

12          Q    -- you had?

13          I'd like to ask some questions about that and the other  
14        interagency meetings that you had.

15          Can you just tell us how did you participate in the SVTC  
16        on July 18th?

17          A    So the way it works is that in the White House, in  
18        the Old Executive Office Building, there is a room, there's a  
19        series of rooms where they have interagency meetings.

20          MR. BELLINGER: I'm not sure all of this is public.

21          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Ah.

22          MR. BELLINGER: You guys have to scrub it later.

23          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Fair point. Thank you, Counselor.  
24        You think it might be classified that there are those?  
25        Anyway, yeah.

1                   MR. BELLINGER: No, no, no. It used to be, it used to  
2 be, but times have changed. It was classified when I was  
3 there.

4                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Okay. So --

5                   THE CHAIRMAN: I am just going to interject. I want to  
6 make sure we're not going it to get into classified  
7 information today.

8                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: We're not. Unless the existence of  
9 these classified rooms is classified. I can't -- which I  
10 don't think it is.

11                   BY MR. NOBLE:

12                   Q     Perhaps a way to navigate this would be to shortcut  
13 it and just say it's a conference call system.

14                   A     Thank you. That's a good idea. It is a conference  
15 call.

16                   Q     Okay.

17                   A     It is a secure conference call.

18                   Q     Okay.

19                   A     I'm in Kyiv. I'm in a secure room. Can I say  
20 that? And there are several other satellite officers that  
21 beam in. And we're all in different parts of --

22                   Q     So this is a video conference?

23                   A     It's a video conference, a secure video conference.

24                   Q     Okay. So you can see who the other participants  
25 are?

1           A    It depends on -- so if the camera is right there,  
2    all of those folks can be on the screen but I'm not, because  
3    it's going right over my head. So the answer is most, but  
4    not all. And I couldn't see the person who said -- the OMB  
5    person who said: I've been told to stop this.

6           Q    Okay. Do you know the identity of the OMB staffer?

7           A    I don't.

8           Q    But you believe -- I believe your testimony said  
9    you believe it was a female staffer?

10          A    It was.

11          Q    Okay. And to this day you still don't know who it  
12    was that announced it?

13          A    I don't.

14          Q    Did you participate in the subsequent interagency  
15    meetings about the aid?

16          A    One of them. As I say, there -- this was a  
17    sub-PCC, so a Sub-Policy Coordination Committee. And then  
18    there is a Policy Coordination Committee, and that is chaired  
19    at the assistant secretary level. And then there's a  
20    Deputies Committee. And then there's a Principals Committee.  
21    And then there's an NSC meeting.

22           And it went -- and so I was present and beamed in from  
23    Kyiv for the sub-PC and the PC, but not the ones above that.

24          Q    Okay. Can you tell us what happened at the PCC  
25    meeting, the second one?

1                   A     Yes. Around the room, observations, information  
2     about the value of the assistance. In particular OSD, I  
3     think it was Laura Cooper, who is probably on your list, made  
4     a very strong case and continued to make a very strong case  
5     for the effectiveness -- indeed, her office was the one  
6     overseeing this assistance, so she made a very strong case  
7     for that.

8                   Others around -- the State Department representative,  
9     strong statement, we made a strong statement about the  
10   importance of this assistance.

11                  Q     And was there an OMB representative there for that  
12   meeting?

13                  A     I don't know the answer.

14                  Q     Okay.

15                  A     Probably.

16                  Q     Do you recall whether there was any communication  
17   from the White House or from OMB regarding the freeze and  
18   whether it was going to stay in place at that meeting?

19                  A     I don't. I think coming out of that meeting was  
20   the instruction that we're continuing -- that we're  
21   continuing the policy as it had been. And, probably after  
22   the PCC, the State Department and maybe the Defense  
23   Department decided they were going to move forward with this  
24   assistance anyway, OMB notwithstanding. This was a big  
25   decision that L came to over there, over some debate as to

1       whether or not they could do it without OMB's clearance, send  
2       a CN to the Hill without OMB's clearance, and they decided to  
3       do that. I don't know if they've ever done that before.  
4       This was a big decision for them.

5           Q     So as far as you know, that was unprecedented?

6           A     As far as I know.

7           Q     Was that related to the FMF or USAI portions of the  
8       assistance? Do you know?

9           A     I think both.

10          Q     Do you know whether there was any kind of written  
11       documentation of kind of the decisions made at these  
12       meetings?

13          A     There is every time.

14          Q     Okay. And State Department would have a copy of  
15       those?

16          A     NSC would probably have those.

17          Q     NSC.

18          A     And they were then sent out to the interagency,  
19       including the State Department.

20          Q     Okay. Are you aware whether there were any kind of  
21       preconditions or certifications that had to be made with  
22       respect to Ukraine before the funding could flow?

23          A     In this case, for --

24          Q     Yeah, for this assistance.

25          A     The only thing I heard was that there was a request

1       -- and I'm not sure who it came from, but it may have come  
2       from the NSC -- to the Defense Department for an evaluation  
3       of the assistance to be sure that it was being well spent and  
4       it was effective. And the Defense Department came back very  
5       quickly with the conclusion that it was.

6           Q     Well, we've heard claims that President Trump was  
7       interested in corruption or concerned about corruption  
8       generally in Ukraine. Are you aware that DOD, in  
9       consultation with the State Department, had certified that  
10       Ukraine had taken sufficient steps to address corruption such  
11       that they were entitled to the aid at that time?

12          A     Mr. Noble, I'm not sure. I think in the Defense  
13       Authorization Act every year there are conditions that are  
14       required to be met in order for that assistance to go  
15       forward. And my understanding is those conditions were met.  
16       On this specific one I'm not sure. I think so.

17          Q     Okay. In your statement on page 4 you reference  
18       several actions that President Zelensky had taken quickly to  
19       address corruption in Ukraine, including opening Ukraine's  
20       High Anti-Corruption Court, which had been a U.S. policy goal  
21       for quite some time.

22          A     We played a big role in that, yes.

23          Q     And President Zelensky had done that at that point?

24          A     He had done that and he showed up himself at the  
25       opening of the High Anti-Corruption Court -- with the two

1       Senators, by the way. They were both there as well.

2           Q    Which two Senators?

3           A    Senator Murphy and Senator Johnson.

4           Q    And then President Zelensky had also, after winning  
5           control of the Rada, he changed the Ukrainian Constitution to  
6           remove absolute immunity from Rada Deputies, which you say in  
7           your statement was a source of corruption for over two  
8           decades. Is that right?

9           A    So Rada Deputies -- I imagine Representatives in  
10          this body and in the Senate would love to have this -- but  
11          the Rada Deputies in Ukraine up until the point where they  
12          changed the Constitution could commit any kind of crime and  
13          not be prosecuted.

14          And that was changed, he changed that right away, a  
15          commitment that he'd made in his campaign, and he made good  
16          on that commitment right away. And overwhelming support. It  
17          had been promised every Rada by every President before, it  
18          never happened. He got it done.

19          Q    So not only had President Zelensky campaigned on  
20          rooting out corruption, I believe his number one priority,  
21          but he had taken concrete steps. And yet the OMB, the  
22          President, still had decided to freeze the aid purportedly  
23          because he had some concerns about corruption in Ukraine?

24          A    It is certainly true that he made -- he is not only  
25          fighting corruption. So he changed the -- President Zelensky

1           changed the language. He said he wants to defeat corruption.

2           So he was really focused on this, he made it his number  
3           two priority. Number one priority was stopping the war on  
4           Ukrainian terms and number two was defeating corruption. And  
5           he did a lot on that.

6           And it was -- we talked earlier about how we're focused  
7           on institutions fighting corruption. So the High  
8           Anti-Corruption Court and the Special Prosecutor and all, the  
9           institutional way of fighting corruption, rather than case by  
10           case.

11           And so, yes, he pushed that very hard.

12           Q        Okay. So I want to move, fast forward a little bit  
13           to August. And I noticed in your statement that there's a  
14           little bit of a time gap between -- on page 9 -- between July  
15           28th to the middle of August, to August 16th, between the  
16           first and second paragraphs on page 9.

17           And I also noticed that in the text messages that we  
18           have in which you're a participant that Ambassador Volker  
19           produced, there's also a similar gap in that timeframe.

20           So if you take the -- if you have the text messages and  
21           you turn to -- let's go to page 28 first. And if you look at  
22           -- I'll direct your attention to the top there. And  
23           beginning on or around August 11th -- well, actually, yeah,  
24           back to the top there.

25           So these are text messages between you and Ambassador

1 Volker.

2 A Okay.

3 Q There's one July 24th, 2019, where Volker says:

4 Hi, Bill. Can you talk now?

5 Do you see that?

6 A I do.

7 Q And then it skips forward till August 3rd and you  
8 have a discussion about: Did Tim -- I believe that's Tim  
9 Morrison -- say how he was doing on the call?

10 And then it skips forward to August 11th. And it's not  
11 until August 16th, I believe, that you kind of start talking  
12 again about the investigations or the requests for a White  
13 House meeting. Do you see that?

14 A I do.

15 Q Okay. And then, if you move to page 38, so this is  
16 the three-way text message chain between you and Ambassador  
17 Volker and Ambassador Sondland. And if you look toward the  
18 bottom, there's a big gap between August 6th, 2019, and it  
19 then jumps to August 29th, 2019. Do you see that?

20 A I see that, right.

21 Q Do you recall whether you had any WhatsApp  
22 conversations with Ambassador Sondland and Ambassador Volker  
23 basically during the month of August, or the last 3 weeks of  
24 August?

25 A From the 6th to the 29th?

1           Q     Yeah. Do you know whether there'd be any messages  
2     that might have been deleted here?

3           A     Oh, I don't know if it's possible to delete on  
4     these things. I don't know. I don't know the reason for the  
5     gap.

6           Q     Okay.

7           A     Yeah, yeah, yeah. The State Department has all of  
8     mine. I have them as well. But, yeah, the State Department  
9     has all of these.

10          Q     Okay. But in this timeframe were you aware that  
11     Ambassador Volker and Ambassador Sondland were in direct  
12     communication with Mr. Yermak and with Mr. Giuliani about the  
13     drafting of a statement that they wanted President Zelensky  
14     to release?

15          A     So only after -- only after Ambassador Volker  
16     released his texts. I think that's where they showed up.

17          Q     So you weren't involved, as far as you can  
18     remember, in the drafting of that?

19          A     I was not.

20          Q     Okay. So that was something that Ambassador Volker  
21     and Ambassador Sondland were doing with Giuliani and Yermak?

22          A     Yes.

23          Q     Okay. So I would like to show you kind of the end  
24     result of that process. If you turn to page 23 of the text  
25     messages. And, again, these aren't ones that you were on.

1           But the last couple messages on that page, from August  
2 13th, 2019, this is an exchange between Ambassador Volker and  
3 Mr. Yermak.

4           And Volker writes: Hi, Andrey. Good talking.  
5 Following is text with insert at the end for the two key  
6 items. We will work on official requests.

7           And then Ambassador Volker drafts -- pastes the  
8 statement that they want President Zelensky to release. And  
9 it reads: "Special attention should be paid to the problem  
10 of interference in the political processes of the United  
11 States, especially with the alleged involvement of some  
12 Ukrainian politicians. I want to declare that this is  
13 unacceptable. We intend to initiate and complete a  
14 transparent and unbiased investigation of all available facts  
15 and episodes, including those involving Burisma and the 2016  
16 elections, which in turn will prevent the recurrence of this  
17 problem in the future."

18           So this is a draft statement that Ambassador Volker and  
19 Ambassador Sondland had drafted with Rudy Giuliani for  
20 President Zelensky to release. Were you involved in the  
21 crafting of this?

22           A     I was not.

23           Q     Okay. So you had no knowledge that this was going  
24 on at the time?

25           A     I had no knowledge.

1           Q     Were you aware of any statement generally that --

2           A     I wasn't until I saw these once they were released.

3           Q     Okay. How did you react when you learned, I guess  
4     from seeing Ambassador Volker's text messages, that this had  
5     been going on behind the scenes, given that you're the Charge  
6     d'Affaires in Ukraine, and yet you have no idea that Volker  
7     and Sondland are working with Giuliani and Yermak to get out  
8     a statement from the President of Ukraine and you had no idea  
9     that that's going on? Did that concern you?

10          A     It did. When I found out about it -- again, this  
11     was the irregular channel, I was in the regular channel.  
12     Every now and then I would see what was going on in the  
13     irregular channel, but not in this case.

14          And, yeah, I mean, I should have been involved, but I  
15     knew that there were a lot of communications between  
16     Ambassador Volker preceding -- and President Zelensky and  
17     Yermak -- preceding my arrival. They had a relationship.

18          And similarly with Ambassador Sondland. Ambassador  
19     Sondland had a relationship, he told me, I don't know -- I  
20     think this is true -- that he could WhatsApp and phone and  
21     call President Zelensky. And normally, in a normal  
22     arrangement, the ambassador helps either facilitate that or  
23     monitors that or is at least aware of that and gets  
24     back-briefed on that. I had accepted that this was an  
25     unusual circumstance.

1           Q     I mean, is it -- would you say or would you agree  
2     that these text messages and the drafting of this statement  
3     was, in effect, making concrete the quid pro quo that you had  
4     realized in mid-July, as you describe in your statement, that  
5     a White House visit was dependent on President Zelensky  
6     making a public commitment to those two specifics  
7     investigations?

8           A     So again, being careful about my use and  
9     understanding of quid pro quo, which is imperfect at best,  
10    the facts were that these relationships between the  
11    announcement and the meeting -- or phone call and the meeting  
12    -- and then the security assistance, it was clear to me that  
13    there was that relationship.

14           What I didn't know was there were these -- this drafting  
15    session, this drafting exercise to put together the language  
16    that President Zelensky would use.

17           Q     Okay. I want to fast forward a little bit to  
18    September 7th or 8th. Do you recall sending George Kent a  
19    WhatsApp message regarding your conversation with Tim  
20    Morrison about what President Trump wanted Zelensky to do?  
21    Do you recall telling George Kent about that?

22           A     Is this mentioned in my statement --

23           Q     No, but if you go to your statement --

24           A     September 5th. This is with -- Senators Johnson  
25    and Murphy were in town.

1 Q And then on page 12 in the middle.

2 A Right.

3 Q It says you had a call with Mr. Morrison where he  
4 had a, quote, sinking feeling --

5 A Yes.

6 Q -- after learning about the conversation that  
7 President Trump had with Ambassador Sondland.

8 A Yep.

9 Q Did you relay that in a written communication to  
10 George Kent? Do you remember that?

11 A I don't remember.

12 Q Can we go back to the text messages and turn to  
13 page 53, the last page?

14 A Okay. I'm informed that on my text message there  
15 was a text back to George Kent.

16 Q Okay.

17 A So let me be clear. I didn't remember it until  
18 just now and this great colleague back here reminded me that  
19 this was there.

20 Q Okay. And those text messages have been turned  
21 over to the State Department?

22 A They have, they have, they have.

23 Sorry, where are we now?

24 Q Sure. Last page of the text messages, page 53.

25 A Yes.

1           Q     At the top of the page, I believe, on September  
2     8th, 2019, 11:20 a.m. Gordon Sondland says: Guys, multiple  
3     convos with ZE.

4           That's Zelensky, correct?

5           A     Yes.

6           Q     And POTUS.

7           A     Yes.

8           Q     President Trump.

9           A     Yes.

10          Q     Let's talk.

11          A     Right.

12          Q     And then you go on to have a conversation, which I  
13     believe is the conversation you describe in your statement.  
14     Is that right?

15          A     Yes.

16          Q     On page 12?

17          A     Yes.

18          Q     Okay. And that's where President Trump had made  
19     clear that if Zelensky did not, quote, "clear things up in  
20     public," there would be a, quote, "stalemate." Is that  
21     right?

22          A     That is correct.

23          Q     And you understood that stalemate meant that  
24     Ukraine would not get the military assistance?

25          A     That's correct.

1                   Q     Okay.  Was Ambassador Volker on that call with you  
2 and Ambassador Sondland?

3                   A     I'm sure he was, yes.

4                   Q     During that call, did you discuss the possibility  
5 of President Zelensky --

6                   A     Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.  On the phone call?

7                   Q     The phone call, yes.

8                   A     No, no, no, no.  The phone call was just --

9                   Q     Just you and Sondland?

10                  A     Yes.  Right.  Sorry.  The text was the three of us,  
11 the phone call was just the two of us.

12                  Q     Okay.  During that phone call did you discuss the  
13 possibility of President Zelensky doing the CNN interview  
14 during the YES Conference in Ukraine?  Is that when that  
15 first came up?

16                  A     That's when he -- yes, that's when Ambassador  
17 Sondland said that he had talked with them and they -- and  
18 the Ukrainians had agreed to do a CNN interview.

19                  Q     Okay.  Can you just describe in a little more  
20 detail your recollection of that conversation with Ambassador  
21 Sondland?  Was this the first time you had heard the idea of  
22 President Zelensky making a public announcement on CNN about  
23 these investigations?

24                  A     It was certainly the first time I'd heard about it  
25 on CNN.  We'd had earlier conversations about making public

1 comments. I think that is the case here. I'm remembering  
2 the thing about the interest that Ambassador Sondland had in  
3 having President Zelensky go in a box, in a public box. So  
4 there were those conversations on a couple of occasions.  
5 This is the first time on CNN, talking about CNN interview.

6 Q And do you recall the dates of the YES Conference?  
7 When was this interview supposed to take place?

8 A The interview, the CNN interview I think was going  
9 to be in UNGA, which is at the end of September. The YES  
10 Conference was the first week in September, as I recall,  
11 maybe the first -- oh, no, no, sorry. It was the Friday,  
12 Saturday -- Saturday is the 14th of September. But I  
13 don't -- and there was a lot of press at the YES Conference.  
14 I don't think there was talk about doing an interview there.

15 Q Okay. So you think that the interview that  
16 President Zelensky was going to do that you discussed with  
17 Ambassador Sondland during your call on September 8th was  
18 going to be during UNGA?

19 A When we were talking about it on September 8th, I  
20 think it was not clear when it was going to be.

21 Q Okay.

22 A And when it didn't -- when it didn't happen, didn't  
23 happen, and then they were approaching the UNGA meeting on,  
24 what, the 25th of September, then they got more serious --  
25 then I started hearing about the CNN interview. And so it

1       was going to take place in New York.

2           Q     Okay. Going back to the text messages, do you see  
3     the message on September 8th at 12:37 p.m.? Can you just  
4     read what you wrote there about "the nightmare"?

5           A     I will.

6                "The nightmare" is they give the interview and don't get  
7     the security assistance. The Russians love it --  
8     parenthetical -- (and I quit.)

9           Q     Can you unpack that a little bit for us?

10          A     Sure.

11          Q     What did you mean by "the nightmare" and what would  
12     the Russians love?

13          A     "The nightmare" is the scenario where President  
14     Zelensky goes out in public, makes an announcement that he's  
15     going to investigate Burisma and the election in 2016,  
16     interference in 2016 election, maybe among other things. He  
17     might put that in some series of investigations.

18                But he had to -- he was going -- the nightmare was he  
19     would mention those two, take all the heat from that, get  
20     himself in big trouble in this country and probably in his  
21     country as well, and the security assistance would not be  
22     released. That was the nightmare.

23                The Russians loving it. The Russians are paying  
24     attention. The Russians are paying attention to how much  
25     support the Americans are going to provide the Ukrainians.

1       The Russians are leaning on Ukraine. They are leaning on  
2       Ukraine about Donbas. They are leaning on Ukraine about  
3       sovereign -- small little sovereign countries here, little  
4       statelets. They are leaning on economically, they have got  
5       the Nord Stream coming through, they have got -- they are  
6       putting pressure on -- they have to come to a new gas  
7       agreement by the 1st of January.

8           So they are leaning on them. And they, the Russians  
9       want to know how much support the Ukrainians are going to get  
10       in general, but also what kind of support from the Americans.

11           So the Russians are loving, would love, the humiliation  
12       of Zelensky at the hands of the Americans, and would give the  
13       Russians a freer hand, and I would quit.

14           Q       And why would that make you quit?

15           A       That's exactly the scenario that I was worried  
16       about when I had my meeting with Secretary Pompeo on the 28th  
17       of May where I said: Mr. Secretary, you know, your current  
18       strong policy of support for Ukraine is one I can support and  
19       I would be glad to go out to Kyiv and support it and push it  
20       hard.

21           However, I told him and the others who were in the room,  
22       if that changes -- and this would have been a change, this  
23       would have been -- it was a nightmare. This would have been  
24       throwing Ukraine under the bus. And I told the Secretary:  
25       If that happens, I'll come home. You don't want me out

1       there, because I'm not going to defend it, you know. I would  
2       say bad things about it. And you wouldn't want me out there  
3       doing that. So I'm going to come home on that. So that was  
4       the message about I quit.

5           Q     And did you communicate that, these concerns around  
6       this time to Secretary Pompeo or --

7           A     I had done so on August 29th.

8           Q     In your -- in the cable?

9           A     Correct.

10          Q     What was the distribution on that cable?

11          A     It was called "NODIS."

12          Q     Okay. What's that mean?

13          A     So it's very limited distribution. It's also first  
14       person, which means the way it reads is: Mr. Secretary, I  
15       am concerned -- I, Bill Taylor -- I am concerned about this  
16       problem.

17           So that's first person. Normally these cables are not  
18       first person, they are third person. So it gets attention,  
19       there are not many first person cables coming, so it gets  
20       attention when it comes in from the ambassador saying: I am  
21       concerned.

22           And "NODIS" means that it is very limited distribution.  
23       It goes obviously to the Secretary. And then if other people  
24       want to read it they have to come up to the Operations Center  
25       in the State Department and they can go into the special room

1 and they can read it.

2 Q And in your statement, I believe page 10, you said  
3 you heard soon thereafter the Secretary carried that cable  
4 with him to a meeting at the White House focused on security  
5 assistance for Ukraine. Where did you hear that from?

6 A Deputy Assistant Secretary George Kent.

7 Q Okay. And do you know what, if anything, else  
8 Secretary Pompeo did after receiving your cable to follow up?

9 A I know that -- I know that he had been pushed -- I  
10 think I mentioned that after the July 18th meeting where the  
11 assistance was frozen by the OMB hand, that there were a  
12 series of these meetings, up to and including Secretary of  
13 State and Defense. And so I know that Secretary Pompeo was  
14 working on this issue, that he wanted it resolved.

15 I was getting more and more concerned that it wasn't  
16 getting resolved. And so I wanted to add my concern and my  
17 arguments, from the perspective of Kyiv and the Ukrainians,  
18 about how important this assistance was.

19 Q Okay. And you said -- how did you learn that the  
20 aid had been unfrozen? I believe it was on September 11th,  
21 is that right?

22 A It was September 11th. So, yeah, I remember  
23 getting an email from a staffer, a Senate Armed Services  
24 Committee staffer. And of course Senate staffers -- House  
25 staffers too, I'm sure -- get the word much earlier than

1       anybody else.

2           And so I got this email, I think it was probably  
3           overnight, which I then sent to Tim Morrison and I think  
4           maybe to George Kent saying: Oh, this is great news. This  
5           is what we've been waiting for.

6           And Tim hadn't heard it yet. So that's how I first  
7           heard. And then he later that day confirmed.

8           Q     Okay. Are you aware that The New York Times  
9           published some communications, some emails, relating to the  
10           release of the freeze that involved you on October 9th, 2019,  
11           with a State Department employee, Brad Freedon (ph)?

12          A     Oh, I do remember this, yes.

13          Q     Do you recall those emails?

14          A     This is the one where Brad said something about  
15           nothing to see here, move along.

16          Q     I believe the quote is: Keep moving people,  
17           nothing to see here.

18          A     There you go.

19          Q     Did you have any communications with Mr. Freedon  
20           (ph) or anyone else at the State Department about why they  
21           wanted to keep the release of the funds quiet?

22          A     No, I didn't have a conversation with Mr. Freedon  
23           (ph) on this one. I imagine that -- my understanding -- my  
24           view of this was that, as I said earlier, this was an  
25           embarrassment, this freeze on assistance was a mistake, an

1       embarrassment, and it was going to be fixed, it had to be  
2       fixed. And the less said and the less attention it got, the  
3       less embarrassing it was.

4           So I was fine with don't talk about this or, you know,  
5       let's not make a big deal of this.

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1 [4:23 p.m.]

2 BY MR. NOBLE:

3 Q Okay. On or about September 14th, so after the aid  
4 was released, do you recall a meeting that you and Ambassador  
5 Volker had with Andriy Yermak?

6 A I do. It was a dinner.

7 Q A dinner. Can you tell us what happened at that  
8 dinner?

9 A One of the things that happened was Mr. Yermak  
10 described to Kurt and me, described to Ambassador Volker and  
11 me, their plans for a resolution of Donbas, how they were  
12 going to get to a resolution with Donbas.

13 There was a fourth person there, another of his --  
14 another Ukrainian colleague.

15 There were a couple other topics discussed, Mr. Noble,  
16 but anything in particular that I should try to remember?

17 Q Do you recall anything about an investigation  
18 involving former Ukrainian President Poroshenko coming up  
19 during that meeting?

20 A I do.

21 Q Can you tell us about that conversation?

22 A Yes. I can. I can see Ambassador Volker has been  
23 here.

24 Yes, so Ambassador Volker suggested to Mr. Yermak and  
25 Mr. Novikov, the other Ukrainian, that it would be a good

1 idea not to investigate President Poroshenko, the previous  
2 President. And one of the reasons Kurt said that was there  
3 were indications, and maybe even some actions taken by that  
4 time, that made it clear that the new government, the new  
5 Zelensky government, was going to go after President  
6 Poroshenko for a range of issues, on things like -- people in  
7 this room will remember that President Poroshenko was in  
8 office at the time of the Kerch Strait incident. This was  
9 Thanksgiving a year ago, when the Russians attacked these  
10 Ukrainian patrol ships, patrol boats. And President  
11 Poroshenko was getting blamed for and being possibly even  
12 taken to court for some of those military decisions that he  
13 made.

14 And, at that dinner, both Mr. Yermak and Mr. Novikov  
15 took out their cell phones -- I, of course, don't have -- but  
16 took out their cell phones and pulled up pictures of their  
17 relatives -- one was a brother, and one was a cousin -- who  
18 had been killed or wounded in the east. And they showed this  
19 to Kurt and me, and they said, Poroshenko is responsible for  
20 this.

21 There was a deep-seated anger at Poroshenko at an  
22 emotional level. And that was one of the things  
23 motivating -- one of the things motivating the attacks on, or  
24 the court cases on President Poroshenko. Not the only ones.  
25 There were others. This oligarch that I mentioned earlier,

1 Kolomoisky, also had it in for Poroshenko.

2 And Kurt said, you know, you should move forward, don't  
3 prosecute Poroshenko. And they responded, take a look at  
4 this.

5 Q Do you recall Yermak saying anything to the effect  
6 that, why shouldn't we investigate Poroshenko when you're  
7 pushing us to investigate Joe Biden?

8 A Oh, I don't remember that, but -- I don't remember  
9 that.

10 Q Okay.

11 After the freeze was lifted, it sounds like, from your  
12 statement, you still had concerns that President Zelensky  
13 might go forward with the CNN interview and still announce  
14 the investigations. Is that right?

15 A That's right.

16 Q Why did you have that concern that that was going  
17 to happen?

18 A I had the concern because I had a couple of  
19 meetings with President Zelensky and Andrei Bohdan, his Chief  
20 of Staff, about this time. It was just after -- it was on  
21 the 13th, I think, of September, just after the hold had been  
22 released.

23 And walking out of that meeting, Andriy Yermak was about  
24 to walk in. And I had just said to President Zelensky,  
25 bipartisan support of Ukraine in Washington is your most

1       valuable strategic asset, don't jeopardize it. And don't  
2       intervene -- don't interfere in our elections, and we won't  
3       interfere in your elections. I had just said that to  
4       President Zelensky, and on the way out I said the same thing  
5       to Andriy Yermak. And the body language was such that it  
6       looked to me like he was still thinking they were going to  
7       make that statement.

8           Q       At that point, had there been a White House meeting  
9       for President Zelensky scheduled?

10          A       No. And there still hasn't been.

11          Q       Okay.

12          Did you participate in UNGA? Were you here in New York?

13          A       No.

14          Q       No? Did you help prepare for President Trump's  
15       meeting with President Zelensky?

16          A       Yes. I sent in a suggestion to Tim Morrison on  
17       what should -- you know, what he could use as the President's  
18       talking points when he sat down with Zelensky, basically  
19       making the point that, you know, correct, a good, solid,  
20       substantive conversation. Yeah. And that's in the cables,  
21       I'm sure, that the State Department is preparing.

22          Q       Okay.

23          THE CHAIRMAN: I'd like to give priority to the members  
24       that have been here for most of the day.

25          Mr. Welch?

1                   MR. WELCH: I'll be brief.

2                   I just want to, first of all, thank you. But I've been  
3                   listening all day and -- pretty much all day, and what I  
4                   understand your testimony more or less is, succinctly -- and  
5                   correct me if I'm wrong -- is: You have a longstanding  
6                   interest in Ukraine; it's been the U.S. policy since 1991 to  
7                   support Ukraine; that the policy has been internally for  
8                   Ukraine to fight corruption, and we've been supportive of  
9                   that, externally to resist aggression from Russia, and we  
10                   were trying to be supportive of that; that when you were  
11                   faced with this question of whether to return to public  
12                   service at the request of Secretary Pompeo, you had a frank  
13                   conversation where you made it clear that you had to be  
14                   assured that you could defend what had been the consistent  
15                   United States policy in both those respects; that if, in  
16                   fact, you were unable to do that or the policy changed, you  
17                   candidly said you would have to quit; that you then began  
18                   your service on the understanding that the policy was to  
19                   fight internal corruption and to resist external aggression;  
20                   and that, as time developed, you started having questions as  
21                   to whether there was a secondary channel for that policy;  
22                   and, over time, you came to see that not only was there a  
23                   secondary channel but that it included a policy variance from  
24                   the traditional one of fighting aggression and corruption;  
25                   that you had specific information from people who had talked

1 to President Trump, including Mr. Volker and Mr. Sondland,  
2 that what that policy was was essentially to extract an  
3 agreement from the President of Ukraine to do these  
4 investigations and that everything, not just the White House  
5 meeting but the aid itself, was conditioned on getting that  
6 agreement and that explicit statement; and, at the end, there  
7 was an effort to, quote, put President Zelensky in a box,  
8 which the public statement would make him do.

9 Is that a fair summary of what you've said?

10 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Excellent summary, Congressman. The  
11 one thing -- the only clarification I would make is that, in  
12 the beginning, in late June and early July, in July, there  
13 was, in my view, my observation, not a conflict. There was  
14 not a conflict --

15 MR. WELCH: Right.

16 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: -- between these two channels.

17 MR. WELCH: No. And you were clear that just having  
18 somebody outside of the normal State Department isn't  
19 necessarily a bad thing.

20 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

21 MR. WELCH: Having two policies was the question.

22 But just a couple more, because I want to yield to my  
23 colleagues.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Welch, our time has expired.

25 MR. WELCH: Okay.

1                   THE CHAIRMAN: We'll come back to you at the very top of  
2 the next.

3                   MR. WELCH: Sure, Mr. Chairman. I yield.

4                   THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

5                   Forty-five minutes to the minority.

6                   BY MR. CASTOR:

7                   Q     Where we last left off was a discussion of -- it  
8 was right around the time of this telephone call, July 25th.

9                   A     25th, yes.

10                  Q     And the very next day, you had a meeting with  
11 President Zelensky.

12                  A     Correct.

13                  Q     And I think you told us that feedback from the call  
14 from the Ukrainians was positive, for the most part.

15                  A     Yes.

16                  Q     They had put out a statement --

17                  A     They had put out a statement. They'd mentioned  
18 investigations or -- I should look at that statement. But  
19 they had mentioned something that led me to believe that they  
20 were in the same meeting, that they were describing exactly  
21 that call.

22                  Q     Okay. So --

23                  A     Law enforcement, I think it was. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

24                  Q     Was there any other discussion during that meeting  
25 that was a fallout from the call?

1           A    Not that I recall. The bulk -- so it was  
2           Ambassador Volker, Sondland, and I were all there. And the  
3           bulk of the call, after the brief conversation about the --  
4           I'm sorry. The bulk of the meeting after the brief  
5           conversation about the call was on how to solve Donbas.

6           Q    Were you surprised when you read the whistleblower  
7           complaint? And, first of all, did you see the whistleblower  
8           complaint before it was public?

9           A    No.

10          Q    Okay. So it was made public, I think, on Thursday,  
11           September 26th.

12          A    Okay.

13          Q    Were you surprised when there was a discussion of  
14           this July 26th meeting in the whistleblower complaint?

15          A    Mr. Castor, I remember reading that quickly, but I  
16           may have missed that July -- but can you remind me what  
17           the --

18          Q    Sure.

19          A    Yeah.

20          Q    On page 4 of the complaint -- we can give you the  
21           complaint.

22          A    I'm sure I have it somewhere, but that's okay.

23          Q    You know, it states that Ambassadors Volker and  
24           Sondland reportedly provided advice to Ukrainian leadership  
25           about how to navigate the demands that the President had made

1 to Zelensky.

2 Does that ring any bells? Does anything of that sort --

3 A This is in the 26th meeting?

4 Q Yeah.

5 A Advice to Zelensky about how to navigate the --

6 Q Demands of the President.

7 A I was in that -- so the records of -- my records of  
8 that meeting are in the State Department, and they will come.

9 Q Okay.

10 A I don't recall that.

11 Q Okay. By that --

12 A Ah. Ah. Thank you, Counsel.

13 He did ask -- one thing that was in addition to the  
14 brief conversation about the call and Donbas, and it may have  
15 been at the end, President Zelensky still expressed his  
16 interest in the face-to-face meeting in the Oval Office.

17 Q Okay.

18 A Yeah. Thank you.

19 Q But by that point in time, from your limited  
20 knowledge of what had occurred on the call, you didn't know  
21 that the President had made any demands or there was anything  
22 to navigate.

23 A Correct.

24 Q Okay. So, to the extent the whistleblower  
25 complaint chronicles that -- and you were in the meeting, and

1       you don't remember anything of that sort.

2           A    I don't remember that.

3           MR. MEADOWS: Steve, let me -- your response, that you  
4        don't remember that, is really an indication that you don't  
5        recall that happening. Is that correct?

6           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

7           MR. MEADOWS: Okay. I just wanted to clarify that.

8           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes. Yes. Good point.

9           BY MR. CASTOR:

10          Q      Now, the various requests for the Ukrainians to  
11        open investigations that had been closed, did you have any  
12        opposition to the effort for Ukraine to investigate, you  
13        know, Ukrainians that had been engaged in wrongdoing that may  
14        have --

15          A      Just in general? Was that the question? Or --

16          Q      Right. You didn't have any objection to  
17        investigations being reopened that genuinely deserved to be  
18        reopened?

19          A      So when President Zelensky comes into office --  
20        well, even before that -- when he runs for President and then  
21        is elected and then takes office, again, his second priority  
22        was defeating corruption. And he said, I think in the call,  
23        in the July 25th call, he said he has a new prosecutor  
24        general, who is very good, by the way. And President  
25        Zelensky said, this man will do the investigations and, you

1 know, he will enforce the law.

2 Q Okay.

3 A And so, yes, he committed to have Prosecutor  
4 General Ryabshapka, and then again recently saying that he'll  
5 take a look at all these --

6 Q Uh-huh.

7 A -- take a look at all these cases.

8 Q Okay.

9 There was a reference to reaching out to the Justice  
10 Department. You mentioned Deputy Assistant Attorney General,  
11 which I assume is Bruce Swartz?

12 A It is.

13 Q Did you ask Ambassador Volker to reach out to Bruce  
14 Swartz?

15 A He volunteered to do that.

16 Q Okay. And what was the feedback from Swartz?

17 A I don't know that they ever connected.

18 Q Okay. And was there any followup effort to close  
19 the loop with the Justice Department?

20 A No. I thought the whole thing was a bad idea.

21 Q You thought it was a bad idea to reach out to Bruce  
22 Swartz?

23 A No. I thought the idea of the Americans asking the  
24 Ukrainians to investigate a violation of Ukrainian law was a  
25 bad idea.

1 Q Okay.

2 A But Kurt, for some reason, wanted to pursue that.

3 And when he volunteered to take that question to Bruce  
4 Swartz, that was fine with me.

5 Q Okay. I mean, is it possible that Swartz's  
6 feedback on that issue would have been compelling to the  
7 group? Like, why didn't anyone follow up with Swartz?

8 A No idea.

9 Q Okay.

10 You called Counselor Brechbuhl on August 21st to engage  
11 about whether there was a change in U.S. policy.

12 A Yes.

13 Q And presumably that was on the heels of the  
14 security assistance being held up?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Was that the first time you had engaged Brechbuhl,  
17 you know, in the month of August?

18 A In the month of August?

19 Q Uh-huh.

20 A So I'd had a couple meetings with him before I  
21 left.

22 Q Right.

23 A I called him early on, I think in -- this may have  
24 still been July, about the security assistance, and then -- I  
25 think about security -- and then called him again.

1 Q Okay.

2 A Yeah.

3 Q So, on the 8/21 call that you mention on page 9 of  
4 your statement --

5 A Yep.

6 Q -- did you, at that time, alert him that you had  
7 concerns about the irregular channel?

8 A At that time? Let's see. At some point, I had a  
9 conversation with him about -- I wasn't calling it the  
10 irregular channel at this point. I was talking about  
11 Ambassador Sondland, Ambassador Volker. And it might have  
12 also been in this case.

13 Q Okay.

14 A But it was not the main thing.

15 Q Okay.

16 A The main thing was security assistance.

17 Q Okay. I'm just wondering, you know, during July  
18 and August, you're getting increasingly concerned, correct?

19 A Correct.

20 Q It culminates on August 27th when you wrote this  
21 first-person cable.

22 A I sent it in on the 29th.

23 Q Okay, but the end of August, right?

24 A Right.

25 Q And then by September 8th, you're discussing the

1                   prospect that you might have to quit, right?

2                   A        I was discussing that even earlier. I was -- my  
3                   cable on the 29th hinted at that as well.

4                   Q        Okay. And so, on the 21st, did you raise any of  
5                   these concerns? I mean, you had him on the telephone, right?

6                   A        Yes. Yes. So when I asked him explicitly about a  
7                   change in policy, he and I both remembered that a change in  
8                   policy was what I was concerned about on May 28th. And this  
9                   is why on a couple of times we've had that conversation. He  
10                  knew exactly what I was talking about.

11                  Q        Okay. And did he give you any feedback or -- I  
12                  mean, you're sounding -- are you sounding the alarm? Is that  
13                  a fair characterization?

14                  A        I'm sounding the alarm on the 21st. I'm sounding  
15                  the alarm on the 23rd. I had another conversation, oh, with  
16                  Tim Morrison, I think, asking the same question. Is that --  
17                  am I getting these numbers right? Next day, yes, on the 22nd  
18                  with Morrison, I asked him the same thing, had there been a  
19                  change in policy.

20                  Q        Uh-huh.

21                  A        So, yes, I am getting increasingly concerned. I'm  
22                  trying to get from Washington what's going on.

23                  Q        And did Brechbuhl give you any indication that he  
24                  was going to talk to the Secretary or he hears you loud and  
25                  clear --

1           A    Hears me --

2           Q    -- and he'll try to do something about it?

3           A    He says, "I will check."

4           Q    Okay.

5           A    "I will check."

6           Q    And did he check?

7           A    I don't know. I didn't hear anything back from  
8        him.

9           Q    Okay.

10          And then Ambassador Bolton comes to Ukraine on  
11        August 27th?

12          A    Correct.

13          Q    And did you discuss these issues with him at that  
14        time?

15          A    At the end of -- yes. Yes. At the end of his --  
16        he was there for, like, 3 days. And the second day -- he  
17        left the morning of the third day, early. The evening of the  
18        second day, which I think is maybe the 28th of September or  
19        so, I asked for a meeting with him to talk about this. And,  
20        again, this is the 28th.

21          September 29th is when the word leaks out in the  
22        Politico article, okay, there is a hold on -- so it wasn't  
23        out then, and, thus, it wasn't a topic of conversation with  
24        the Ukrainians. And he saw the full range of Ukrainians,  
25        including the President.

1           But I knew it. And I asked him at the end of his  
2 meeting, at the end of his visit, before he went to bed, if I  
3 could have a session with him. And I did, and I raised  
4 exactly this question. It was he who suggested then at that  
5 meeting that I write this note to Secretary Pompeo, which I  
6 did the next day.

7           Q     Okay. Did he urge -- he didn't urge a telephone  
8 call or anything of that sort?

9           A     No. He urged the first-person cable to get  
10 attention back there.

11          Q     Okay. Did you ask him whether he was trying to  
12 work the issue from his vantage point?

13          A     He indicated that he was very sympathetic. I had  
14 known from earlier conversations with people that he was also  
15 trying with the two Secretaries and the Director of the CIA  
16 to get this decision reversed. So he confirmed that and  
17 urged me to make my concerns known to the Secretary again.

18          MR. SMITH: Before we leave this, I think the Ambassador  
19 said the meeting was on September 27th. It was August 27th.

20          MR. CASTOR: Okay.

21          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct. Oh, did I say September?

22          MR. SMITH: I think you did.

23          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Thank you, Counselor.

24          MR. MEADOWS: So, Ambassador -- can I follow up with  
25 just one clarifying?

1                   So, Ambassador, you said that you were aware of  
2 Ambassador Bolton's advocacy for this. You were aware of  
3 that how? From whom?

4                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I was aware, Congressman, in the  
5 discussions that followed the meeting at the NSC where the  
6 hold was put on. And it rapidly went up the chain to  
7 Ambassador Bolton. And was told a couple of times by people  
8 at State and people at the NSC that the Secretary of Defense,  
9 Secretary of State, the National Security Advisor, and the  
10 head of CIA all strongly supported the resumption of this  
11 assistance.

12                  MR. MEADOWS: Who told you that? That's what I'm trying  
13 to get at. I mean, who were the conversations with?

14                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm sure they were with Deputy  
15 Assistant Secretary of State George Kent.

16                  MR. MEADOWS: From the State Department standpoint.

17                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The State Department.

18                  MR. MEADOWS: All right. From the NSC standpoint -- I  
19 mean, who would have direct knowledge of what Ambassador  
20 Bolton had done or was doing that conveyed that to you?

21                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, again, what I know is  
22 those principals were trying to get together with the  
23 President to have this meeting. So, knowing that --

24                  MR. MEADOWS: Right, but you said somebody told you  
25 about Ambassador Bolton's advocacy --

1                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's what I was referring to. I  
2 was referring to that I knew what his position was, because  
3 he wanted to get that group together to make the case.

4                   MR. MEADOWS: So did he tell you he was getting the  
5 group together? Or who told you the group was getting  
6 together?

7                   I guess I'm a little concerned on who at NSC would've  
8 been telling you about Ambassador Bolton. You felt like he  
9 was a kindred spirit on this. So who was telling you from  
10 the NSC that he was?

11                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It would've been either -- it  
12 would've been Tim Morrison. But I can't remember the  
13 specific phone call.

14                  But, again, the main reason I know where Ambassador  
15 Bolton was was that interest in getting it reversed, getting  
16 the decision reversed, and the way to do that was to get a  
17 meeting with the President. So that was my main source of  
18 information. And that came, as I say, from the State  
19 Department.

20                  BY MR. CASTOR:

21                  Q      And then you had a subsequent conversation with  
22 Morrison? It sounds like you're talking to Morrison pretty  
23 much every day during this time period?

24                  A      "Every day" is too strong, but -- let's see. Yeah.  
25 So Morrison is with Bolton.

1 Q Okay.

2 A So he's in Kyiv. He goes on to Warsaw with Bolton,  
3 and he and I have conversations from Warsaw.

4 Q Okay. What's Morrison's background? Where did he  
5 come from?

6 A He came -- so he took Fiona Hill's place, coming  
7 from another part of the NSC doing arms control, and I don't  
8 know what before that.

9 Q So you sent the first-person cable where you  
10 mention the term "folly."

11 A I did.

12 Q Did you get any feedback from the seventh floor on  
13 that cable?

14 A I got feedback from the sixth floor on that.

15 Q Okay. What feedback did you get?

16 A I got feedback saying, I'm glad you sent that  
17 cable.

18 Q Okay. Did you get any feedback from the Secretary  
19 or --

20 A I didn't. I didn't. As I say, I know he carried  
21 it with him to one of these meetings where they were going to  
22 try to reverse the decision, but no direct feedback.

23 Q Okay. How about from Mr. Brechbuhl?

24 A Nope.

25 Q Anybody else?

1           A    Not -- no, again, other than the desk. I somehow  
2    made sure -- I think I sent an email to Ulrich Brechbuhl to  
3    ensure that he saw that cable, and he may have sent back an  
4    acknowledgement that he'd seen it.

5           Q    Okay.

6           After the hold was lifted --

7           A    Yes.

8           Q    -- and the funds started to flow, was there any  
9    other activities that concerned you in the irregular channel?

10          A    Not that I can remember.

11          Q    Okay. I mean, you talked about the statement, the  
12    possible CNN interview, and some of these --

13          A    Correct.

14          Q    -- concerns from that channel.

15          A    Correct. But that had been in train for -- so I  
16    was trying to be sure that the things from the other channel  
17    that had been put in place, like the CNN interview, didn't  
18    happen.

19          Q    Okay.

20          A    And then the focus was on UNGA, as we said, on the  
21    General Assembly. And that, of course, was back into the  
22    regular channels, I mean, all the preparations for that.

23          Q    Did any of your conversations with Morrison reveal  
24    any concerns about the Giuliani-Sondland-Volker channel from  
25    that point on?

1           A    Not that I recall.

2           Q    Okay. Did you ever have any communications with  
3           Morrison after the aid was released where he indicated to you  
4           that the problem was solved and on to the next issue?

5           A    No. No. His -- no. My conversations with Tim  
6           Morrison have been primarily, in particular since then, since  
7           the aid was released, on China. He was very concerned about  
8           China's investments in Ukraine, so we've had many  
9           conversations about that.

10          Q    Okay. So you still talk with Mr. Morrison with  
11          some regularity?

12          A    I do.

13          Q    When did the fact that there was a complaint lodged  
14          about these matters come to your attention?

15          A    I'm not sure, Mr. Castor.

16          Q    The whistleblower complaint, when did that first  
17          come to your attention?

18          A    The whistleblower complaint?

19          Q    Yeah.

20          A    I guess when I read it in the paper.

21          Q    Okay. Which was towards the end of September or  
22          before it was made public?

23          A    No, no, no. In the newspaper.

24          Q    Okay. Did anyone try to contact you to find out  
25          any information, any firsthand information?

1 A No.

2 Q Okay.

3 A No.

4 Q How frequently do you have conversations with the  
5 DNI about these issues? Any?

6 A I think none.

7 Q Okay. Does a person by the name of Eric Ciaramella  
8 ring a bell for you?

9 A It doesn't.

10 Q So, to your knowledge, you never had any  
11 communications with somebody by that name?

12 A Correct.

13 Q After the aid was released, did you ever have a  
14 close-the-loop session with Volker and Sondland?

15 A About that topic?

16 Q Yes.

17 A I don't think so.

18 Q Okay. So, once the aid was released, it was sort  
19 of --

20 A That was my big concern.

21 Q Okay.

22 A Right.

23 Q The telephone conversation that Sondland relates,  
24 talking to the President, was pretty definitive, was it not?

25 A I think so. It is the one we're talking about that

1       he relates he had with the President --

2           Q     Right.

3           A     -- and then Morrison also reports on that same  
4        conversation, I think.

5           Q     Right.

6           A     That's right. Yes.

7           Q     And Morrison's view of that conversation is  
8        slightly different than Sondland's, is it not?

9           A     It could well be.

10          So I'm looking at, what, page 12 here. He described a  
11        phone call earlier in the day between Sondland and Trump.  
12        Sinking feeling from Ambassador Sondland.

13          So that may answer this question earlier about whether  
14        he was on it.

15          Q     Yeah.

16          A     According to Morrison, President Trump asking for a  
17        quid pro quo -- was not asking. Did insist that President  
18        Zelensky go to a microphone.

19          And then Sondland and I spoke on the phone. He said he  
20        talked to President Trump. Adamant Zelensky himself had to  
21        clear things up. The same comment about no quid pro quo.  
22        Sondland said he talked to the President and then he talked  
23        to Zelensky and Yermak after that.

24          Q     Uh-huh.

25          A     So it sounds like they're talking about the same

1 phone call.

2 Q What was the sinking feeling?

3 A This was a comment that Mr. Morrison made when he  
4 heard that there were a Sondland-President Trump phone call,  
5 and that gave him a sinking feeling. And I think what he  
6 meant by that was, he recognized that that channel -- that's  
7 the irregular channel I've been talking about all day -- has  
8 the potential to be counter to the regular channel. And  
9 whenever he heard that there was an activation of that  
10 irregular channel, you know, he was concerned.

11 Q Okay. How frequently, to your knowledge, was  
12 Sondland in discussion with the President?

13 A This is a good question. Ambassador Sondland will  
14 tell you, has told you, told me: frequently. Frequently. I  
15 mean, I can't -- I don't know.

16 I know for a fact that he can call the President  
17 directly and does. And I've known this has -- I have heard  
18 that on several occasions he had done that, so it's not just  
19 a one-off. I mean, he's done it a bunch -- a couple times  
20 that I know of.

21 Q Okay. So it's a regular enough occurrence that  
22 he's probably talked to the President 10, 20, 30 times?

23 A I have no idea of the number.

24 Q Okay.

25 There's a little bit of a disconnect between -- like,

1       right around this time period is when Sondland reports the  
2       President is pretty definitive, "I don't want anything. I  
3       want nothing." But right at the same time, Morrison is  
4       revealing that he has a sinking feeling.

5           And so I'm just curious as to how you piece those two  
6       together. Because, on one hand, the President says, I want  
7       nothing, then the aid's released; but, on the other hand,  
8       Morrison has the sinking feeling.

9           A      Morrison's sinking feeling is anytime there is an  
10       activation of that kind of Giuliani-oriented channel.

11          Q      Uh-huh.

12          A      But it seems to me that they describe the -- it  
13       seems to me that they describe the same phone call. You're  
14       right, there was some variance.

15          Q      Right.

16          A      And both related that the President said no quid  
17       pro quo. But they also both related that President Trump did  
18       insist that Zelensky go to a microphone and open  
19       investigations of Biden and 2016, and President Zelensky  
20       should want to do it himself, and --

21          Q      But that part's not from Sondland's readout of the  
22       call.

23          A      This is Morrison telling me about a Sondland-Trump  
24       meeting --

25          Q      Okay.

1           A    -- phone call. Right? And then Sondland -- Gordon  
2        tells me the next day, on September 8th, that he talked to  
3        President Trump -- it must have been the day before -- and  
4        that Trump was adamant that President Zelensky himself --

5           Q    Uh-huh.

6           A    Because a week earlier, I had suggested to Gordon  
7        that maybe the prosecutor general could make this statement;  
8        it would be more logical than the President.

9           Q    But, in any event, you're only hearing this from  
10       either Sondland or Morrison, and you have no idea whether  
11       these calls actually happened.

12          A    I think they actually happened, just because I got  
13       two reports of what sounded like the same call.

14          Q    Okay. But by --

15          A    But it's true that I never talked to the President.

16          Q    Okay. But by September 9th, there had been some --  
17       I mean, it had become public, right, with the Politico story  
18       that the aid was being withheld?

19          A    That was August 29th.

20          Q    Right. So by September 9 --

21          A    Correct, it was out there.

22          Q    -- on the eve of the aid hold being lifted --

23          A    Yep.

24          Q    -- it had been public.

25          A    For a week, week and a half.

1 Q Right.

2 A Yeah.

3 Q And, as we understand it, there were Senators, you  
4 know, calling the --

5 A Two Senators came up. Oh. Right, right. You're  
6 exactly right. Senators called the President. Yes.

7 Q Okay. So it's possible Sondland -- when Sondland  
8 says the President doesn't want anything, no quid pro quo,  
9 it's possible the President's reacting to the fact that he's  
10 getting some heat on this issue and he's about to lift the  
11 hold.

12 A I don't know.

13 Q Okay.

14 A Don't know.

15 MR. MEADOWS: So I wanted a few clarifications --

16 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Please.

17 MR. MEADOWS -- because sometimes my ears --

18 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I have the same problem. I have the  
19 same problem.

20 MR. MEADOWS: So are you saying you got a call about the  
21 Sondland-Trump phone call from Morrison --

22 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

23 MR. MEADOWS: -- before you did from Sondland?

24 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct. I got the Morrison call on  
25 the 7th, and I got --

1                   MR. MEADOWS: Is that unusual, I mean, that you would  
2                   get a report from the NSC on a phone call between an  
3                   Ambassador and the President of the United States before you  
4                   got a readout from the Ambassador or to the President?

5                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, it's just a matter of  
6                   logistics of when you're on what call.

7                   MR. MEADOWS: Yeah, but I guess the question I have is,  
8                   does Morrison report on other phone calls between the  
9                   President and other individuals to you? I just find that  
10                  just interesting, that he would pick up the phone and call  
11                  you and say "by the way" about this readout between a phone  
12                  call and the President before Ambassador Sondland did that.

13                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It was before. There's no doubt it  
14                  was before Ambassador Sondland did that. That's clear from  
15                  the 7th and 8th of September.

16                  But Tim Morrison and I have a lot of interactions that I  
17                  just mentioned to Mr. Castor, and I may have called him with  
18                  some other questions about, I don't know, China, and he may  
19                  have related that. So it was not a regular -- I don't  
20                  remember any other time when he related a conversation about  
21                  the President.

22                  MR. MEADOWS: So, obviously, this would've been a big  
23                  deal, this phone call, I mean, with the President saying, no  
24                  quid pro quo. Did you have a relief at that point that,  
25                  well, gosh, since there's no quid pro quo, I guess the funds

1 are going to be released?

2 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That was not my reaction at the  
3 time, Congressman. My --

4 MR. MEADOWS: Well, what was your reaction? Because I  
5 guess I'm a little -- I mean, if this is such a big deal --

6 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It is a big --

7 MR. MEADOWS: -- that you raised it with a Ukrainian  
8 official on September 1st --

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

10 MR. MEADOWS: -- why would you have not reacted in a  
11 more, I guess, exuberant manner?

12 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: To the statement that I heard twice,  
13 that it was not a quid pro quo? Is that --

14 MR. MEADOWS: Right.

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I should've been exuberant about  
16 that? Oh, because -- I'm just trying to understand your  
17 question. And so --

18 MR. MEADOWS: Yeah. No, that's the question. You  
19 understand it. I guess I find it that it was just very blasé  
20 that you got a phone call --

21 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I --

22 MR. MEADOWS: -- when you had raised this, and you  
23 didn't --

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Please let the witness answer.

25 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The answer, Congressman, is that --

1                   MR. MEADOWS: Adam, I have not interrupted you at all  
2 today.

3                   THE CHAIRMAN: I know, but he's trying to answer three  
4 times in a row.

5                   MR. MEADOWS: I'm trying to clarify my question. He's  
6 asked me two or three times.

7                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: And I think I got the question now.  
8 Thank you.

9                   MR. MEADOWS: Okay.

10                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Thank you, Congressman.

11                  So the answer is that, even after the statement that I  
12 heard both times from both recollections, recitations,  
13 descriptions of the phone call, after the quid pro quo, there  
14 is none, there is none, there is none, then it went on --  
15 both conversations went on to say: But President Trump did  
16 insist that President Zelensky go to a microphone and say he  
17 is opening investigations of Biden and 2016, and President  
18 Zelensky should want to do this himself. That was the --  
19 that's what Tim --

20                  MR. MEADOWS: And that came from Morrison?

21                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That came from Morrison.

22                  MR. MEADOWS: Okay.

23                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: What came from Sondland when he told  
24 me this story was President Trump said it was not a quid pro  
25 quo. Ambassador Sondland said that he had talked to

1 President Zelensky and Yermak and told them that, although  
2 this was not a quid pro quo, if President Zelensky did not  
3 clear things up in public, we would be at a stalemate.

4 MR. MEADOWS: All right.

5 And so let me go back to one other thing, because I  
6 think you said -- you've said it twice now, and I want to  
7 make sure I understand you. You do not think it's  
8 appropriate for the Ukraine Government to investigate a  
9 violation of Ukrainian law. Is that what you said?

10 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, no. I think it's perfectly  
11 appropriate for the Ukrainian Government to investigate a  
12 violation of Ukrainian law. I think it's --

13 MR. MEADOWS: Okay. All right. I thought so.

14 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yeah, yeah.

15 MR. MEADOWS: All right.

16 So one other area. You talked about -- and I think it  
17 was Mr. Noble had asked you about the funds being withheld,  
18 and you said you believed that it was the aid and foreign  
19 military sales as well, all together in one bunch, in answer  
20 to his question.

21 And I want to remind you, actually, the talk of the  
22 Javelins and foreign military sales, it comes at a separate  
23 time. And I want to refresh your memory on that and perhaps  
24 allow you --

25 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: You're --

1                   MR. MEADOWS: -- to correct the record. Because I think  
2                   Mr. Noble asked the question and you lumped it all together  
3                   and said it came at one time --

4                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No --

5                   MR. MEADOWS: -- and we know that that's not accurate.

6                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Let me tell you what I think is  
7                   accurate.

8                   MR. MEADOWS: Okay.

9                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: What I think is accurate is there  
10                  was 250 million in something called the Ukraine Security  
11                  Assistance Initiative, USAI. And that --

12                  MR. MEADOWS: Controlled by DOD.

13                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: -- is owned by DOD, correct.

14                  MR. MEADOWS: That's correct.

15                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct. And there's another  
16                  141 million of, I think it's FMF that's run by the State  
17                  Department.

18                  MR. MEADOWS: State Department.

19                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is separate from -- those two  
20                  things are separate from the purchase of Javelins by the  
21                  Ukrainians with their own money --

22                  MR. MEADOWS: That's correct.

23                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: -- of about \$29 million for about  
24                  150 Javelins, right? So those are three separate pieces. If  
25                  I was not clear on that --

1                   MR. MEADOWS: Yeah. Because they came in three separate  
2                   tranches. And I used to be on Foreign Affairs, and when we  
3                   talk about all of this stuff, there's a whole lot of things  
4                   that hold up foreign aid.

5                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

6                   MR. MEADOWS: And so you're a career Foreign Service --

7                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I am actually not a career Foreign  
8                   Service, but I've been in the State Department for a long  
9                   time.

10                  MR. MEADOWS: Well, you've been in the State Department  
11                  for a long time.

12                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's correct.

13                  MR. MEADOWS: And so have you seen aid held up for a  
14                  variety of reasons other than just a normal appropriations  
15                  glitch? Have you seen Senators put a hold on foreign aid  
16                  occasionally --

17                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

18                  MR. MEADOWS: -- to get votes on things that --

19                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't know about getting votes on  
20                  things. But, sure, there are certainly holds put on foreign  
21                  assistance packages. There's no doubt about it.

22                  MR. MEADOWS: That have nothing to do with our overall  
23                  foreign policy initiative. Have you seen that?

24                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't remember, but I would not be  
25                  surprised. I would not be surprised.

1                   MR. MEADOWS: All right.

2                   MR. JORDAN: Ambassador, how many conversations and/or  
3                   meetings did you have with Mr. Morrison in this relevant time  
4                   period?

5                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: "Relevant time" meaning all summer?

6                   MR. JORDAN: Well, you said you had one -- you get there  
7                   on June 17th and you had one conversation with the individual  
8                   who held Mr. Morrison's position at NSC. You had one  
9                   conversation in your first month there, and it was on  
10                   July 19th.

11                  So, between July 19th and the September timeframe when  
12                  Mr. Morrison calls you to tell you about a call that  
13                  Mr. Sondland had with the President of the United States, how  
14                  many times between July 19th and September 9th, roughly, how  
15                  many times did you communicate with Mr. Morrison? It sounds  
16                  like it was a lot.

17                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yeah. I was going to say 8, 10, 12.  
18                  A good number. A lot.

19                  MR. JORDAN: Yeah. So his predecessor you had one  
20                  conversation with in this timeframe.

21                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Well, no. I actually had -- before  
22                  I went out, I sat down with Fiona and Alex -- actually, a  
23                  couple times before I went out. And then had this meeting --  
24                  or had this call --

25                  MR. JORDAN: Well, earlier, in a previous hour, when I

1       asked you how many conversations you had with Dr. Hill  
2       between June 17th and July 19th, you said one, and that was  
3       on July 19th.

4           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: And I think that's correct. And  
5       what I'm saying is before I --

6           MR. JORDAN: And we tried to establish -- it sounded  
7       like it was on your calendar. She probably called you, but  
8       you weren't sure. Am I characterizing that accurately?

9           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's correct.

10          MR. JORDAN: So you had one conversation with Dr. Hill  
11       in your first month on the job.

12          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I think that's correct, yes.

13          MR. JORDAN: And now you've said you had multiple  
14       conversations with Mr. Morrison.

15          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

16          MR. JORDAN: Okay. This one that was in your testimony,  
17       was this Mr. Morrison called you to tell you about that, or  
18       was it his previously scheduled call?

19          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: We're talking about September 7th  
20       now, Congressman?

21          MR. JORDAN: Let me just go back and look. Yeah, the  
22       September 7th -- you described a phone conversation between  
23       Ambassador Sondland and President Trump. Did he call you?

24          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The way we do these phone calls is,  
25       to be secure, to be secure -- September 7th may be a -- was

1       it a Sunday? September 7th. It was a Saturday. So to have  
2       a secure call on a weekend, I go into the Embassy.

3            MR. JORDAN: Okay.

4            AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: And the way we arrange these calls  
5        is through unclass email. We say, Tim, you know, you got  
6        time? Or he may have sent me a note saying, do we have time?  
7        And I'd said, sure, I'll go into the Embassy at such and such  
8        a time.

9            So the short answer is I'm not sure who called whom.

10          MR. JORDAN: Okay. But you had multiple calls between  
11        July 19th and this call on September 7th.

12          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

13          MR. JORDAN: And did you have a prior friendship or  
14        relationship working with Mr. Morrison prior to his time as  
15        coming in --

16          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, I had not met him before.

17          MR. JORDAN: So you'd never met him before.

18          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

19          MR. JORDAN: He gets Dr. Hill's position.

20          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

21          MR. JORDAN: And then you have multiple phone calls with  
22        him in this timeframe.

23          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's correct.

24          MR. JORDAN: And I think you said some of it was  
25        relative to China. And Ukraine as well? The linkage --

1                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

2                   MR. JORDAN: -- between China and Ukraine?

3                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, China in Ukraine.

4                   MR. JORDAN: I understand.

5                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: China investing in -- yes.

6                   MR. JORDAN: Okay.

7                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yeah, he's very -- he and  
8                   Dr. Kupperman and many people, as you are I'm sure aware, are  
9                   concerned about the Chinese interest in buying up some of  
10                   Ukrainian technology and a company called [REDACTED]. Yes.  
11                   So we had many conversations about that.

12                   MR. JORDAN: Okay. And of these multiple conversations,  
13                   many conversations you had, do you think it's -- characterize  
14                   it. Was it more Mr. Morrison reaching out to you to  
15                   communicate information to you or the other way?

16                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Both.

17                   MR. JORDAN: Who initiated?

18                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It's both.

19                   MR. JORDAN: Who initiated most? I'm just curious.

20                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm just --

21                   MR. JORDAN: You don't know?

22                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Both. I don't know.

23                   MR. JORDAN: Okay. Thank you.

24                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It's some of each.

25                   MR. JORDAN: All right.

1                   MR. MEADOWS: And so this phone call you had was on a  
2 Saturday.

3                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: September 7th I think was a  
4 Saturday.

5                   MR. MEADOWS: So how many times do you go in to make  
6 phone calls on urgent matters on a Saturday?

7                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Not infrequently, sadly.

8                   MR. MEADOWS: So you literally say, well, I need to go  
9 talk to Washington, D.C., and go in on a Saturday --

10                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: If it has to be secure, yes, I go  
11 into the Embassy. And the Embassy is 25 minutes away.

12                  MR. MEADOWS: No, I get the secure nature, but --

13                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yeah.

14                  MR. MEADOWS: So what you're saying is you go into the  
15 Embassy to make this phone call to talk about a phone call  
16 that he had with the President.

17                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That he had it --

18                  MR. MEADOWS: Sondland had it with the President.

19                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Right. Morrison is talking about a  
20 Sondland conversation with the President, correct.

21                  MR. MEADOWS: Okay. And so, as you go in -- you don't  
22 recall what else you talked about?

23                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: In that phone call?

24                  MR. MEADOWS: Yeah.

25                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't.

1 BY MR. CASTOR:

2 Q You first learned you were going to be coming here  
3 today to answer questions last week? Or before?

4                   A     No, no, no. You sent me -- somebody sent me a note  
5     or an invitation to come probably 2 weeks ago?

6 Q Okay.

7 A Yeah.

8 Q But prior to today, have you had any communications  
9 with congressional staff about any of the issues that we've  
10 discussed here today?

11 A No.

12 Q Okay. And, you know, there was a report running  
13 yesterday about things that may or may not have occurred on a  
14 codel, and I just want to --

15 A Staffdel, maybe. Was it a staffdel?

16 Q Codel or staffdel.

17                   A     So I saw a report. Maybe this is what you're  
18                   asking.

19           While I was in Kyiv -- this must've been -- maybe about  
20       the same time. I can't remember. In September. The  
21       Atlantic Council had one of its many visits, and the Atlantic  
22       Council invites congressional staff. Generally, they are  
23       fairly junior congressional staff. And I think there were  
24       probably 15 or so congressional staffers on this trip.

25 John Herbst. Ambassador Herbst organizes these. It was

1       a Sunday afternoon. They were just off the plane. They came  
2       to my residence, and I gave them a briefing. And it could've  
3       been that one of your staffers was on this, Mr. Chairman.

4           Q     My question was just simply, you haven't had  
5       communications with --

6           A     I have not.

7           Q     -- congressional staff outside of what we're here  
8       doing here today?

9           A     That's right. Other -- if the question is about  
10       that Atlantic Council one, there were a bunch of  
11       congressional staffers whom I gave a regular briefing to.

12           Q     Okay. Fair enough.

13           What else -- what can you tell us about the Atlantic  
14       Council? Did you know they were funded in part by Burisma?

15           A     You know, I didn't know that. I didn't know that.  
16       So I have great respect for the people -- I know a lot of the  
17       people at the Atlantic Council. And I know that -- and I  
18       know that they have to raise funds. I didn't know that  
19       Burisma was one of their funders.

20           Q     Okay. But you learned that recently or --

21           A     Maybe in the past week.

22           Q     Do a lot of Ukrainian business enterprises  
23       contribute money to the Atlantic Council, to your knowledge?

24           A     I don't know.

25           MR. CASTOR: Mr. Armstrong, did you have something you

1           wanted to --

2           MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, just briefly.

3           You were talking about the High Court of  
4           Anti-Corruption. And that was actually set up under  
5           Poroshenko, but it was inactive. And when Zelensky got  
6           elected, he brought it back, right?

7           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir. "Inactive" is probably --  
8           well, it wasn't put into effect. It wasn't -- it didn't  
9           start. And the problem was, it didn't have a place to meet.  
10           And so -- under President Poroshenko. And so people were  
11           thinking that he was kind of dragging his feet.

12           MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah.

13           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: And then Zelensky gets in, and  
14           within, like, 2 weeks, the same fellow, this prosecutor  
15           general that I mentioned a minute ago, Ryabshapka, came up  
16           with a place, got them in, and they opened it on  
17           September 5th.

18           MR. ARMSTRONG: But earlier in your testimony, you  
19           said -- we had a comment about Parliament, and you said you  
20           can buy your way into Parliament. We asked about criminal  
21           justice. You can buy your way out of prosecution essentially  
22           is going on.

23           And there were actually -- you had talked earlier about  
24           concerns about Zelensky's relationship with a particular  
25           oligarch. There were concerns about the Naftogaz board, the

1       boards of state-owned banks, and, obviously, even outside of  
2       all of this, some questions about Burisma and what we just  
3       found out.

4           And corruption relating to oligarchs is not something  
5       new, correct?

6           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

7           MR. ARMSTRONG: I mean -- and during this, we went  
8       through it. I mean, there was a parliamentarian, Leshchenko,  
9       who was investigated. You said he was an original supporter  
10       of Zelensky and then wasn't?

11           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: So he was originally -- well, he  
12       started off as a journalist. He joined President  
13       Poroshenko's party and was elected to Parliament. And then,  
14       as a reformer, he was advising the Zelensky campaign,  
15       self-selected out of the Zelensky camp.

16           MR. ARMSTRONG: And people were excited about Zelensky's  
17       election, but also, at the same time -- and I'll get back to  
18       this in a second -- I mean, there was at least four current  
19       or former members of the Ukrainian Government that were, I  
20       mean, participating in our 2016 election. And I don't mean  
21       anything -- I mean, they were posting on Facebook, whether it  
22       was former Prime Minister Yatseniuk was posting on Facebook;  
23       Minister of Internal Affairs -- who is still a member of  
24       government, correct.

25           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

1                   MR. ARMSTRONG: -- Avakov, who has, I mean, said some  
2 pretty derogatory things about the President. Chaly, who was  
3 the Ambassador to Ukraine, coined an op-ed in The Hill during  
4 the campaign.

5                   So we have a concern about a potential relationship with  
6 Zelensky. We have -- I mean, this is systemic, and it's gone  
7 on for a long time.

8                   So, I mean, while we're excited and this is moving  
9 forward and some of these things are going on, you can see  
10 probably how this administration maybe had a little concern,  
11 particularly not only with corruption but also with direct  
12 relationship to what went on with --

13                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, the only thing I'd say  
14 is that the concern should not have been about the new team.  
15 Now, your point is a good one -- that is, they had one  
16 carryover from --

17                  MR. ARMSTRONG: Well, let me ask you this. Because you  
18 weren't the Ambassador during the 2016 election.

19                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's true.

20                  MR. ARMSTRONG: But you were the Ambassador during the  
21 2008 election.

22                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I was.

23                  MR. ARMSTRONG: And if four members of the Ukrainian  
24 Government were directly involved in the election of -- which  
25 ended up being President Obama, in your position of

1 Ambassador, how would you have handled that?

2 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: What would I have done to -- so the  
3 scenario is --

4 MR. ARMSTRONG: Let me ask -- let's start here: Would  
5 that have concerned you?

6 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Any interference of diplomats or of  
7 government officials in an election in another country would  
8 concern me.

9 MR. ARMSTRONG: So I'm assuming none of that happened in  
10 2008.

11 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Not that I know of.

12 MR. ARMSTRONG: Any Ukrainian officials that you're  
13 aware of.

14 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Not that I'm aware of.

15 MR. ARMSTRONG: Okay. Thanks.

16 MR. CASTOR: I think our time has expired.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's take a 5- or 10-minute break. We  
18 do have votes coming up. It would be my intention for staff  
19 to continue the interview during votes. And I don't think we  
20 have a lot more questions for you. I don't know where the  
21 minority is, but hopefully we won't go too much longer.

22 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm at your service, Mr. Chairman.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you, Ambassador.

24 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Thank you.

25 [Recess.]

1 [5:31 p.m.]

2 THE CHAIRMAN: We're going to go back on the record to  
3 try to get to as many members as we can before votes. And  
4 let me start by recognizing Mr. Malinowski.

5 MR. MALINOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Thank you, Ambassador, for your service and your  
7 patience with us today. I just wanted -- you've answered  
8 most of my questions, so I wanted to maybe try to sum things  
9 up a little bit. It seems to me from your testimony and from  
10 that of others that we've heard that there was a group of  
11 officials in the executive branch who were working on Ukraine  
12 and who cared about Ukraine across the interagency.

13 And at the start of this drama, all of you basically  
14 agreed on the objective, supporting Ukraine against Russia,  
15 fighting corruption, promoting democracy. You wanted a good  
16 relationship between the two countries. And then, at a  
17 certain point, you all learned that the President was in a  
18 different place, correct?

19 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes. So, in the May 23rd, before I  
20 got out there, in his meeting with the delegation that came  
21 back enthusiastic about Zelensky, the President was less  
22 enthusiastic.

23 MR. MALINOWSKI: Right. And at that point, things --  
24 that group of people, roughly speaking, split into two  
25 different camps. You all still had the same goals, but there

1       was one group of folks who felt that they didn't want to have  
2       anything to do with what Mr. Bolton reportedly described as  
3       the drug deal because it was wrong, it was unprincipled, we  
4       should not be operating that way.

5           And then there was a second group of people that may  
6       have included Kurt Volker, Ambassador Sondland, Secretary  
7       Perry, who decided that they had to somehow go along with  
8       this drug deal because they felt it was the only way to bring  
9       the President back, to get him to support the vision of the  
10      relationship that you wanted. Is that a fair assessment?

11          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It is, Congressman. And it was  
12       motivated, but as you said, toward a strong relationship. It  
13       was just a different -- they thought they had to take a  
14       different route through Giuliani to get there.

15          MR. MALINOWSKI: Right. And so the problem wasn't with  
16       either of those groups of people. The problem was the drug  
17       deal itself, in effect. It was this decision that, you know,  
18       you had to go through this path to get to that outcome. And  
19       so let me ask you, who was responsible for the drug deal?  
20       Who was responsible for setting all this into motion? Was it  
21       Mr. Sondland? Was it Ambassador Sondland?

22          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't think so. I think the  
23       origin of the idea to get President Zelensky to say out loud  
24       he's going to investigate Burisma and 2016 election, I think  
25       the originator, the person who came up with that was

1       Mr. Giuliani.

2            MR. MALINOWSKI: And he was representing whose interests  
3        in --

4            AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: President Trump.

5            MR. MALINOWSKI: Thank you.

6            THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Krishnamoorthi.

7            MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: Hello, Mr. Ambassador.

8            Thank you for your incredible service to our Nation.

9            AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Thank you, sir.

10          MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: First of all, on page 12 of your  
11        statement, you talked about the meeting that you helped  
12        facilitate between Senators Johnson and Murphy with President  
13        Zelensky. Do you recall that meeting?

14          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I do.

15          MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: And in your statement, you say that  
16        they emphasized that President Zelensky should not jeopardize  
17        bipartisan support by getting drawn into U.S. domestic  
18        politics. What exactly were they referring to when they said  
19        he should not jeopardize bipartisan support by getting drawn  
20        into U.S. politics?

21          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The Senators were concerned -- the  
22        Senators could see that President Zelensky faced a dilemma,  
23        and the dilemma was investigate Burisma and 2016 or don't.  
24        And if they investigated, then that would be seen to be  
25        interfering on the side of President Trump's reelection; if

1       they didn't investigate, that would be seen to be interfering  
2       in favor of some of his -- of President Trump's opponent. So  
3       they told him: Just don't get involved, just don't get  
4       involved.

5            MR. MALINOWSKI: And both Senator Murphy and Senator  
6       Johnson said -- or expressed that sentiment, correct?

7            AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I want to be careful about quoting  
8       Members of Congress and Senators. This is why I was  
9       c counseled by smarter people than I about how to phrase this.  
10       But that was spoken by Senator Murphy.

11        MR. MALINOWSKI: Okay. And, now, some folks might say  
12       that the beginning of those investigations was merely  
13       investigating corruption. Why was it your and their  
14       sentiment that it was actually getting Zelensky drawn into  
15       U.S. politics?

16        AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It would get into U.S. politics if  
17       the Ukrainians were to go -- was to investigate the Burisma  
18       cases that were closed at the time when Vice President Biden  
19       was in town -- in Kyiv frequently making the point about  
20       anticorruption and when his son was on the board of Burisma.  
21       So it was that cluster of issues surrounding Burisma that  
22       would be highlighted by an investigation.

23        MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: And you agreed with the sentiment  
24       expressed by the Senators, correct?

25        AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I did.

1                   MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: Now, let me turn your attention to  
2 page 8 for a second. There?

3                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yep.

4                   MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: Ambassador Sondland said that --  
5 I'm looking at the top of the page -- said that a call  
6 between President Trump and President Zelensky would take  
7 place soon. This is in the July timeframe. And Ambassador  
8 Volker said that what was, quote, most important for Zelensky  
9 to say that he will help investigation and address any  
10 specific personnel issues if there are any, closed quote.

11                  What specific personnel issues are being referred to?

12                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, I don't know. To this  
13 day, I don't know what he was referring to there.

14                  MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: Okay. And did Ambassador Sondland  
15 ever bring up personnel issues?

16                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Not in my -- not that I know of.

17                  MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: Finally, Giuliani. You may or may  
18 not be aware of this, but Giuliani had a hand in trying to  
19 force out Ambassador Yovanovitch from her post as Ambassador.  
20 Are you aware of any attempts by Giuliani or anyone else to  
21 come back at you for some of the text messages that you had  
22 sent basically questioning the wisdom of Ukraine policy that  
23 was being pursued by Volker, Sondland, Giuliani, or anyone  
24 else?

25                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, sir.

1                   MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: And did anybody ever question you  
2 directly about your statements and whether you were somehow  
3 out of line in making the statements that you made?

4                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Not yet.

5                   MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: Okay. Thank you. I hope never.

6                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Thank you.

7                   MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: Do me a favor though: Stay honest  
8 as you are. Thank you, sir.

9                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Thank you, sir.

10                  THE CHAIRMAN: Just one followup question before I go to  
11 my next colleague. Prior to the codel you mentioned with  
12 Senators Murphy and Johnson, Senator Johnson told The Wall  
13 Street Journal that Sondland had described to him a quid pro  
14 quo involving a commitment by Kyiv to probe matters related  
15 to U.S. elections and the status of nearly \$400 million in  
16 U.S. aid to Ukraine that the President had ordered to be held  
17 up in July.

18                  Apparently, Senator Johnson had told this to the Journal  
19 before the codel. Did he ever raise this with you during  
20 those meetings?

21                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: He didn't raise that, no,  
22 Mr. Chairman.

23                  THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Representative Lynch. Then  
24 Maloney and Speier, if you have questions, Speier, Jackie  
25 Speier.

1                   MR. LYNCH: Thank you. Thank you, Ambassador. I really  
2 appreciate your courage in coming forward, and thank you for  
3 your service.

4                   I'd like you to focus on page 10 and 11 of your opening  
5 statement. And September 1st seems to be a red letter day,  
6 so to speak. You have a conversation -- excuse me, yeah, you  
7 have a number of conversations here that are very important.

8                   One you had with Mr. Morrison, who described a  
9 conversation between Ambassador Sondland with Mr. Yermak at  
10 Warsaw, where Ambassador Sondland told Mr. Yermak that the  
11 security assistance money would not come until President  
12 Zelensky commits to pursue the Burisma investigation.

13                  You also say that's the first time you've heard that  
14 security assistance, not just the White House meeting, was  
15 conditioned on the investigation. And then you text message  
16 Ambassador Sondland, and you're saying -- it's a question:  
17 We are now saying the security assistance and the White House  
18 meeting are conditioned on investigations, question mark, end  
19 quote.

20                  There's also a statement here that you relate that  
21 Ambassador Sondland also told you that he now recognized he'd  
22 made a mistake by earlier telling the Ukrainian officials to  
23 whom he spoke that a White House meeting with President  
24 Zelensky was dependent on a public announcement of  
25 investigations, in fact. Ambassador Sondland said everything

1       was dependent on such an announcement, including security  
2       assistance.

3           He said the President -- Trump wanted President  
4       Zelensky, quote, in a public box, close quote, by making a  
5       public statement about ordering such investigations. This is  
6       a rich description. This is all one day, September 1st. And  
7       so I would like to know, is this a product of your memory, or  
8       is this something that you took contemporaneous notes, you  
9       know, at the time that this was occurring?

10          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Contemporaneous notes, Mr. Lynch.

11          MR. LYNCH: They are. And that is your usual practice?

12          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It is, indeed.

13          MR. LYNCH: And did you surrender these notes to the  
14       State Department?

15          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I did.

16          MR. LYNCH: You did?

17          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I did.

18          MR. LYNCH: And do you have copies in your custody?

19          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I do.

20          MR. LYNCH: You do. Okay. That's all I got. I yield  
21       back.

22          THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Maloney.

23          MR. MALONEY: Just a quick followup on that one point.  
24       Over here. My name is Sean Maloney. Ambassador Sondland,  
25       thank you for your testimony today.

1                   Just to follow up on my colleague's question, along  
2 those same lines, when you use quotation marks in your  
3 opening statement, did you have a standard that you applied?  
4 In other words, would we find those phrases, those quotes in  
5 the notes you just described to my colleague, Mr. Lynch?

6                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir. If I had them -- if I put  
7 them in quotation marks, that means I can find them in my  
8 notes. And I took notes -- it would either be in a text  
9 message or WhatsApp message or notes that I took on my little  
10 notebook that I carry around, or a notebook that I keep in my  
11 office that I take notes on phone calls when I'm in the  
12 office. So the answer is, yes, if I've got quotes on them, I  
13 can find them.

14                   MR. MALONEY: Thank you.

15                   I want to direct your attention to page 10. I just have  
16 a couple of questions about the Warsaw meeting.

17                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

18                   MR. MALONEY: Now, we see towards the bottom of page 10  
19 you describe the meeting that Vice President Pence had with  
20 President Zelensky. I believe that was on September 1st?

21                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

22                   MR. MALONEY: And in that fourth paragraph towards the  
23 bottom, you mentioned that while President Zelensky, and I'm  
24 quoting, had opened the meeting by asking the Vice President  
25 about security cooperation, you go on to say, the Vice

1 President did not respond substantively but said he would  
2 talk to President Trump that night.

3 Do you see where I'm reading from?

4 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I do.

5 MR. MALONEY: Do you know whether the Vice President  
6 spoke to the President that night?

7 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't.

8 MR. MALONEY: And then you also go on to say, the Vice  
9 President did not say the President wanted the Europeans to  
10 do -- excuse me, the Vice President did say that President  
11 Trump wanted the Europeans to do more to support the Ukraine  
12 and that he wanted the Ukrainians to do more to fight  
13 corruption.

14 In the next paragraph, however, you describe another  
15 meeting that's going on also in Warsaw, also the same day, as  
16 I understand it, between Ambassador Sondland and Mr. Yermak.  
17 Is that right?

18 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: This is a report of a phone call I  
19 had with Mr. Morrison. I think it's the same one that we  
20 just -- I think he called me to tell me about or I called him  
21 to ask about the events in Warsaw on September 1st.

22 MR. MALONEY: And --

23 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm sorry, Congressman. This is the  
24 same phone call with Mr. Morrison. He went on to describe  
25 this subsequent conversation with Sondland, Yermak.

1                   MR. MALONEY: I think I understand your answer, sir.

2                   But my question is, is in the phone call you're having with  
3                   Mr. Morrison --

4                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: And he's describing a Warsaw meeting  
5                   between Mr. Sondland and Mr. Yermak --

6                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

7                   MR. MALONEY: -- which seems to have happened at the  
8                   same time as the Vice President was meeting with President  
9                   Zelensky. Am I correct?

10                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It was the same event, but  
11                  probably -- I wasn't there, but what happens at these is  
12                  there's a bilateral meeting between Vice President and the  
13                  President with all the aides. And then, after that, the  
14                  aides may get together separately, and that's what I imagine  
15                  happened here.

16                  MR. MALONEY: I understand. Do you know whether  
17                  Ambassador Sondland ever spoke to the Vice President about  
18                  his conversation with Mr. Yermak?

19                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't know.

20                  MR. MALONEY: I want to ask you about one other thing,  
21                  sir, which is, on page 12 and on page 13, my colleague  
22                  Chairman Schiff has taken you at some length through the  
23                  various statements of conditionality and your view of that.  
24                  And it's not my intention to go back into that. I just  
25                  wanted to ask you about the wording you use at this point in

1       the sequence of events.

2           So, on September 8th, there is the call between Sondland  
3       and Volker and you, and you recount this expression about  
4       how when a businessman is about to sign a check to someone  
5       who owes him something, the businessman asks that person to  
6       pay up before signing the check. And then, of course, you  
7       mention that Ambassador Volker used the same term several  
8       days later. Do you see where I'm reading from the from in  
9       the middle of the page?

10           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I do.

11           MR. MALONEY: And you go on to say that holding up  
12       security assistance for -- and you use the words "domestic  
13       political gain" was, quote, crazy. Do you see that?

14           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I do.

15           MR. MALONEY: And the day before -- excuse me, the day  
16       after that, on September 9th, it comes before in your  
17       testimony a couple paragraphs up, but it's actually the next  
18       day is when you write the famous text: I think it's crazy to  
19       withhold security assistance for help with a political  
20       campaign. Do you see that?

21           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I do.

22           MR. MALONEY: And so my question, sir, is, when you use  
23       phrases like "domestic political gain" or a "political  
24       campaign," I want to understand what you meant by that,  
25       because, of course, we're not just talking now about whether

1       or not an investigation was launched or whether or not it  
2       would be appropriate or not to do that. I'm curious about  
3       why you connected it up to, quote, a domestic political gain  
4       and, quote, a political campaign?

5           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Because as I understood the reason  
6       for investigating Burisma was to cast Vice President Biden in  
7       a bad light.

8           MR. MALONEY: That would be the domestic political gain?

9           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

10          MR. MALONEY: To cast Vice President Biden in a bad  
11       light?

12          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Right.

13          MR. MALONEY: And the political campaign would be what  
14       political campaign?

15          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: A political campaign for the  
16       reelection of President Trump.

17          MR. MALONEY: On page 2 of your testimony -- last  
18       question. On page 2 of your testimony, you say that Ukraine  
19       was special, which struck me. You talk about your many years  
20       of service and the extraordinary work you've done for our  
21       country, but in that third paragraph, you say: Ukraine is  
22       special for me. Do you see that? In fact, you say, across  
23       the responsibilities I've had in public service, Ukraine is  
24       special for me. It's in the third paragraph, halfway  
25       through.

1                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes. Yes, sir.

2                   MR. MALONEY: Throughout the day, you've responded to  
3                   our questions in a very professional manner. I take it this  
4                   is your years of training as a diplomat. But I'm curious  
5                   about your emotional reaction to these events. Ukraine, as  
6                   you say, was special to you, and you witnessed this over the  
7                   series of a couple of months this summer from June, I guess,  
8                   through the present, but really to early September,  
9                   especially. What was your emotional reaction to these  
10                  events?

11                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It was a reaction based on the fact  
12                  that, as I mentioned, either before or after that, just after  
13                  that, that I think Ukraine is important objectively to the  
14                  United States. That is not emotionally, but we can do some  
15                  kind of analysis and determine why it's important for Ukraine  
16                  to succeed as a state and why it's important for Russia not  
17                  to succeed in its aggression. That's kind of the analytic  
18                  piece.

19                  The emotional piece is based on my time in Ukraine in  
20                  2006, 2009, when traveling around the country, I got to know  
21                  Ukrainians and their frustrations and difficulties and those  
22                  kind of things. And then coming back and seeing it now where  
23                  they have the opportunity, they've got a young President, a  
24                  young Prime Minister, a young Parliament, the Prime Minister  
25                  is 35 years old. This new government has appealed to young

1       people who are so idealistic, pro-West, pro-United States,  
2       pro-Europe, that I feel an emotional attachment, bond,  
3       connection to this country and these people.

4            MR. MALONEY: You cared about it?

5            AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I cared about this country.

6            MR. MALONEY: And you didn't want to see it screwed up?

7            AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I didn't want to see it screwed up.  
8        I wanted to see it succeed.

9            MR. MALONEY: And you didn't want to see it screwed up  
10        by some political agenda coming from Washington. Is that  
11        fair to say?

12           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Well, what I didn't want to do is  
13        have United States assistance to Ukraine blocked or suspended  
14        for no good reason that I could see. And there are some bad  
15        reasons that -- I didn't want to see that blocked. That was  
16        my concern, in this episode.

17           MR. MALONEY: Thank you, sir.

18           THE CHAIRMAN: Just one followup question before I go to  
19        Representative Speier. In Warsaw, Morrison relates to you  
20        there are two meetings going on. There is a meeting with a  
21        Vice President and President Zelensky, and then there's the  
22        separate meeting between Sondland and Yermak, correct?

23           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct, and they're probably in  
24        sequence. They're probably not at the same time.

25           THE CHAIRMAN: And the meeting with the Vice President

1 and Zelensky was actually a big meeting with one or two dozen  
2 people. Am I right?

3 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Probably. I was not there, but,  
4 yes. Normally that's the case.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: So, at a big meeting like that, it stands  
6 to reason they're not going to get into the specifics about  
7 that we want you to do this political investigation in order  
8 to get this. Am I right?

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: That takes place, in fact, in this small,  
11 private meeting between Sondland and Yermak?

12 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, without -- presumably without  
13 the Vice President.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Representative Speier.

15 MS. SPEIER: Thank you.

16 Ambassador, thank you for really a lifetime of service  
17 to our country. You're really a great American.

18 I've got a couple of kind of strings I'd like to just  
19 get some clarification on. You said that you met with  
20 Ambassador Volker and Mr. Yermak over dinner on the 14th of  
21 September after the money had been released. And Mr. Volker  
22 kept pushing, saying, do not investigate Poroshenko. Did you  
23 have a subsequent conversation with him as to why he was  
24 doing that?

25 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: With Mr. Volker, no. I wouldn't

1 characterize it, Ms. Speier, as saying that he -- or he kept  
2 doing it. I mean, he raised it once, got a pretty emotional  
3 response or kind of, you know, a strong response from both  
4 Ukrainians at the table. And he didn't push --

5 MS. SPEIER: He backed off?

6 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Kurt did not pursue it.

7 MS. SPEIER: But you didn't ask him afterwards why he  
8 was --

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I didn't.

10 MS. SPEIER: Okay. Did anyone in the Zelensky  
11 administration indicate to you a sense of confusion with what  
12 you have dubbed as the irregular policy channel?

13 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Indirectly. So, in my conversations  
14 in the regular channel with President Zelensky and his team,  
15 they would, on occasion, express confusion or uncertainty  
16 about what direction they were getting from the United States  
17 because they were hearing, as I mentioned earlier, directly  
18 from Ambassador Sondland who could and would pick up the  
19 phone and call President Zelensky or President -- Assistant  
20 Yermak and give them advice outside of the normal channel --  
21 outside of my channel, outside of the normal channel. So  
22 they were hearing different things from both -- from those  
23 two channels. And that's confusing.

24 MS. SPEIER: There's hardly any reference to Secretary  
25 Perry, who has been included as one of the tres amigos. Did

1       you have any contact with him?

2           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I didn't.

3           MS. SPEIER: And he was never in any of your text  
4        messages?

5           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, not in any text messages. He  
6        was in two phone calls, Ms. Speier. Early on the -- I think  
7        two phone calls. Certainly was in the June 28th phone call,  
8        and he might have been -- I'll check my notes to see if he  
9        were in the June 18 phone call. But those were the only two  
10       times that I heard him on the phone or had any interaction  
11       with him.

12          MS. SPEIER: Did you think it was peculiar that he was  
13        engaged in this?

14          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No. Secretary Perry is very  
15        interested in energy markets. Ukraine could be a big energy  
16        market. It would be -- Secretary Perry knows that there are  
17        a lot of companies, in particular in Texas, but I'm sure in  
18        other places, who would like to sell liquid natural gas,  
19        liquefied natural gas, LNG, to Ukraine or east Europe more  
20        broadly. So he had been interested in this, and I didn't  
21        think this was very unusual.

22          MS. SPEIER: So, on page 12, third paragraph, you  
23        reference that President Trump did insist that President  
24        Zelensky go to a microphone and say he is opening  
25        investigations of Biden and the 2016 election interference.

1           Was that specific reference to Biden and not Burisma?

2           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I would check my notes, but I think  
3           the answer is yes.

4           MS. SPEIER: So it was very specific to an investigation  
5           of Biden?

6           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

7           MS. SPEIER: All right. There was a lot of discussion  
8           after September 11th that it might be difficult to get all  
9           the money out to Ukraine -- by the September 30th end of the  
10           fiscal year. How much money actually got released?

11           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I should know the answer to that. I  
12           don't know the answer to that. I know it's probably about  
13           90 percent of -- that's rough, Ms. Speier, but roughly  
14           90 percent.

15           MS. SPEIER: Okay. And my last question is, at one  
16           point, there was a reference made, I think it's on page 9,  
17           where Mr. Morrison references that the President doesn't want  
18           to provide any assistance at all. And that's in quotes.

19           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yeah.

20           MS. SPEIER: Did that alarm you?

21           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It did.

22           MS. SPEIER: And coupled with that May 23rd, I think it  
23           was, meeting in the White House where everyone came back very  
24           excited and the President seemed very unexcited, what does  
25           that tell you about his interest in Ukraine?

1                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Again, I have never -- I wasn't in  
2 that meeting. I've never had conversations with the  
3 President. Secretary Pompeo did tell me the same thing that  
4 the participants of that May 23rd meeting said, and that was  
5 the President was skeptical of Ukraine. And we've heard  
6 several descriptions of the skepticism. Some appear in this  
7 -- the Politico article. I mean, he was concerned about the  
8 allegations here. And that's as much as I know about the  
9 President's view.

10                  MS. SPEIER: Okay. Thank you.

11                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Thank you.

12                  THE CHAIRMAN: Representative Lieu.

13                  MR. LIEU: All right. Thank you, Ambassador Taylor, for  
14 your service to our country. Thank you for serving in  
15 Vietnam with the 101st Airborne. I note for the record you  
16 jumped out of perfectly fine airplanes, so thank you for your  
17 courage.

18                  I'd like to talk about U.S. national security. It's a  
19 fundamental principle, intent of U.S. national security to  
20 push back against Russian aggression, correct?

21                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: [Nonverbal response.]

22                  MR. LIEU: And Ukraine is one of the countries at the  
23 tip of the spear of pushing back against Russian aggression,  
24 correct?

25                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It is.

1                   MR. LIEU: And on page eight of your statement, you  
2 write, Ambassador Volker and I could see the armed and  
3 hostile Russian-led forces on the other side of a damaged  
4 bridge across the line of contact. Over 13,000 Ukrainians  
5 had been killed in the war, one or two a week. More  
6 Ukrainians would undoubtedly die without the U.S. assistance.

7                   But I want to make clear, U.S. security assistance to  
8 Ukraine isn't just to help Ukrainian national security. It's  
9 also to help U.S. national security. Is that right?

10                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It is. That's correct.

11                  MR. LIEU: All right. And, in fact, that's why, as you  
12 said, the Department of Defense within a day came back with  
13 analysis saying: We need to give security assistance to  
14 Ukraine.

15                  Isn't that right?

16                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct.

17                  MR. LIEU: Okay. When the President of the United  
18 States freezes aid to Ukraine, the Russians can detect  
19 weakness, isn't that right, between the U.S. and Ukrainian  
20 relationship?

21                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The Russians are very careful  
22 observers of Ukraine and the United States, and they would  
23 immediately -- my bet is they knew. They're very good. My  
24 bet is they knew that there was something up with the  
25 security assistance. So --

1                   MR. LIEU: And if the U.S. doesn't give security  
2 assistance, it could in effect embolden the Russians to be  
3 even more aggressive towards Ukraine. Isn't that right?

4                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Absolutely right.

5                   MR. LIEU: Okay. So, when the President of the United  
6 States freezes security aid to Ukraine for months and months  
7 and months, that not only harms Ukrainian national security,  
8 it also harms U.S. national security. Isn't that right?

9                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

10                  MR. LIEU: All right. Let me move on quickly to one  
11 other aspect. The public reporting on Ambassador Sondland's  
12 testimony is that he didn't remember a lot of stuff. You  
13 have a number of conversations here with Ambassador Sondland.  
14 I just want to make sure, in those conversations, there was  
15 no indication he was under the influence of alcohol, correct?

16                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

17                  MR. LIEU: He didn't slur his words, correct?

18                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

19                  MR. LIEU: There was no indication that he was under any  
20 medications that caused him short-term memory loss, correct?

21                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Not that I know of.

22                  MR. LIEU: Okay. And last couple questions. The State  
23 Department told you not to come here today. Is that fair?

24                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: They did.

25                  MR. LIEU: So did they tell you to also not give

1       documents and notes to Congress, your notes? Did they say  
2       you can't provide that to --

3            MR. BELLINGER: They did. We've been prohibited from  
4       providing documents directly to Congress.

5            MR. LIEU: Okay. Thank you. That's all I have.

6            AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Thank you.

7            MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you, Mr. Lieu.

8            BY MR. GOLDMAN:

9            Q       Just a couple of sort of cleanup questions for you,  
10       Ambassador Taylor, and then I think, at least, on the  
11       majority side, we'll be finished.

12           You were asked by Mr. Jordan about the number of  
13       conversations that you had with Tim Morrison, the senior  
14       director on the NSC. Is it fairly common to speak regularly  
15       with members of the NSC who cover the country where you are  
16       the effective Ambassador or Charge de mission?

17           A       Mr. Goldman, you know, a lot of it depends on the  
18       pace of activity in certain issues, and it certainly is the  
19       case in this one. So the role, of course, of the senior  
20       director is to be the interface between the President,  
21       National Security Advisor and the President, and the  
22       interagency.

23           And, often, they'll be in direct interactions with  
24       people in the field. In particular, I think it's the case  
25       that embassies or ambassadors will be in touch. I try to

1       keep my, you know, DAS Kent, the Deputy Assistant Secretary  
2       George Kent, advised on all of these things, but it's also  
3       very common for an NSC director or senior director to be  
4       directly in touch.

5           And when I said it was dependent to some degree on the  
6       issue, I think I mentioned that Tim Morrison, much more than  
7       Fiona Hill, Dr. Hill, was very interested in Chinese  
8       investment in Ukraine, continues to today. So our  
9       conversations, the vast bulk of the conversations I had with  
10      Tim Morrison concerned the Chinese attempts to buy a  
11      Ukrainian [REDACTED] manufacturer [REDACTED].

12       And he has been a -- Tim Morrison has been a driving  
13      force in Washington to try to prevent that, and we are on the  
14      front end of that. And so, you know, I go down to [REDACTED]  
15      [REDACTED], and I visit and talk to people who are looking  
16      for alternative investors, and Ambassador Bolton, when he was  
17      there, and Tim was there for that visit.

18       The main focus of Ambassador Bolton's visit and  
19      conversations with all of these officials that he had in the  
20      Ukrainian Government was China. And, again, this was the day  
21      before Ukrainians knew that there was even a hold. But it  
22      was China and its attempt to buy [REDACTED]  
23      [REDACTED].

24       So, when the question comes, how often are you talking  
25      to -- well, it depends on the issue. And if there's any --

1       so, for example, Fiona was focused on Russia. She's a Russia  
2       expert. And the Russia-Ukraine Donbas negotiations were  
3       stalled. So there was not much happening there. What was  
4       not stalled was the Chinese attempt -- well, what was not  
5       stalled was our attempt to block Chinese purchase of these  
6       [REDACTED]. So that's what -- Tim was  
7       on the phone a lot for those purposes.

8           Q       You mentioned that you kept Deputy Assistant  
9       Secretary Kent as much up to date as you could.

10          A       Yeah.

11          Q       Did you speak -- during the last few months, since  
12       you arrived there in mid-June, did you speak at all with  
13       Assistant Secretary Phil Reeker?

14          A       A couple of times. Phil Reeker has not focused  
15       very much on Ukraine. He relies heavily on George Kent as  
16       the DAS. And George, as we know, is -- you have had him.  
17       You know George, so he's great. He's an incredible resource  
18       on Ukraine and Thailand, by the way.

19           When I was there in 2006, 2009, he was the deputy  
20       political counselor. He then, of course, went back as the  
21       DCM. He then was pulled back to be the DAS, Deputy Assistant  
22       Secretary. He is a wealth of -- as you probably heard from  
23       him, he's a wealth of knowledge. So Phil Reeker relies on  
24       George Kent, and I'm in constant contact with George Kent.  
25       We have weekly -- we have regular weekly SVTC meetings.

1                   Q     Did you ever raise any concerns about the -- what  
2     you call the irregular policy path or track with Ambassador  
3     Reeker?

4                   A     I don't think so. I think it was primarily with  
5     George Kent.

6                   Q     Any other conversations on the sub topics today  
7     with Ambassador Reeker that come to mind?

8                   A     No. So, let's see, Ambassador Reeker, I think, was  
9     in my -- I have to check my notes on this too -- I think was  
10    in my meeting with Secretary Pompeo, I'm pretty sure he was,  
11    on the 28th of May, before I decided -- as I was deciding.  
12    And Phil was there. And Phil Reeker travels a lot. He has  
13    got all the European countries, and so he's on the road more  
14    than average, I will say, and so hasn't focused a whole lot  
15    on Ukraine.

16                  Q     You said you received reaction to your cable on  
17    August 29th from the sixth floor. Who responded to you?

18                  A     It was actually George Kent, who may actually be on  
19    the fifth floor, but, you know, down one.

20                  Q     Okay. What about Under Secretary David Hale? Did  
21    you communicate at all with him?

22                  A     On occasion. I went to see him before I went out.  
23    And he had visited Kyiv before I got there, so I was hoping  
24    to have him come out, but he didn't. But only on occasion  
25    would I -- I may have tried to be sure that he got the cable,

1 the notice cable.

2 Q Okay. But you never spoke to him about it?

3 A No.

4 Q Did you ever speak to anybody other than George  
5 Kent about your -- at the State Department about your notice  
6 cable?

7 A Ulrich Brechbuhl, I believe, the counselor, just to  
8 be sure that he got it because I wanted to be sure that the  
9 Secretary got it.

10 Q Right. But you never received a response --

11 A I didn't.

12 Q -- in any meaningful way?

13 A I didn't.

14 Q Did you ever receive any indication when you  
15 relayed any concerns to the State Department about this  
16 irregular policy group that anyone in the Department actually  
17 took any steps to resolve anything?

18 A There was some discomfort within the State  
19 Department with Ambassador Sondland's role in Ukraine. Of  
20 course, Ukraine is not in the EU. But it was well-known  
21 that, in that famous May 23rd meeting in the Oval Office,  
22 that Ambassador Sondland was given direction, with Secretary  
23 Perry and Ambassador Volker, to focus on Ukraine, to do  
24 something with regard to Ukraine policy.

25 Q You testified a little bit earlier about a staffdel

1       or Atlantic Council trip --

2           A     Yep.

3           Q     -- where you met with a staff member from the  
4     Intelligence Committee, right? And you had no conversations  
5     about any of these issues --

6           A     No.

7           Q     -- with that individual?

8           A     No.

9           Q     Were you aware that there were also three staff  
10    members from -- Republican Members of Congress who were on  
11    the Foreign Affairs Committee on that trip as well?

12          A     I knew the names and affiliations and members or  
13    committees that each of those members of the staffdel were  
14    on.

15          Q     Did you have any conversations with any of those  
16    staff members about any of the issues here today?

17          A     No. This was a briefing, as I say, in my  
18    residence. I gave them a briefing, and then we had an  
19    opportunity for questions and answers, and they hit it off.

20          Q     Are you familiar with the individuals Lev Parnas  
21    and Igor Fruman?

22          A     I only know them through the newspapers.

23          Q     Or the indictments?

24          A     Or the indictments in the newspapers.

25          Q     So you were not -- but prior to the public reports

1       about their involvement in Ukraine and their association with  
2       Rudy Giuliani, you were not aware of them in any way?

3           A       Mr. Goldman, looking back on this, I think back in  
4       like March or April someone had -- again, when I was at the  
5       Institute of Peace -- sent me some description of  
6       interference in -- what was this deal -- in maybe a natural  
7       gas -- I think there was a -- I think there was a proposal to  
8       sell natural gas to Ukraine.

9           And I think the person who was telling me this  
10       referenced these two names, which I didn't recognize at the  
11       time, and I didn't even register at the time. But now, you  
12       know, in the last, you know, now they're indicted or now they  
13       were picked up at -- then I now recollect that they were  
14       mentioned in this previous discussion.

15           Q       Who were you having this conversation with?

16           A       I got a note from a man named Dale Perry. He's a  
17       businessman.

18           Q       Did you get an open letter from Dale Perry? Did  
19       you ever see that, or a memo of some sort?

20           A       Yes. Yes. Which I then sent -- again, it meant  
21       nothing to me. I was at the Institute of Peace. I had no  
22       idea what he was talking about, but I sent it to George Kent  
23       and to Masha Yovanovitch.

24           Q       Okay. Did you ever get a readout of the private  
25       meeting between President Trump and President Zelensky at

1       UNGA in New York after their press conference?

2           A    Ambassador Volker gave me a description, I think,  
3       of that meeting. It was not too private. I mean, there were  
4       staffs on both sides, right. Okay. I think there's only  
5       one. So I think -- and Ambassador Volker, with not in great  
6       detail, he was in the meeting and said that it was a good  
7       meeting.

8           The President left pleased that they had finally met  
9       face to face. They discussed some connections between  
10      President Zelensky's cabinet or his government and several  
11      cabinet members on President Trump's team that they should  
12      connect.

13          Q    Was there any discussion that you heard of, whether  
14       it was at the principal level or the staff level, about any  
15       of these investigations that we've been talking about?

16          A    No.

17          Q    Now, you said that the new prosecutor general --

18          A    Yes.

19          Q    -- confirmed that he is looking into the issues  
20       that were the subject of the --

21          A    "Confirmed" may be too strong.

22          Q    Sorry. Just for the record --

23          A    Right. Right. Right. So what he said, I think  
24       fairly recently, last couple of weeks, was that he was going  
25       to take a look at all of the cases that had been closed over

1       the past several years to be sure they were done correctly.

2           Q     And would that include a Burisma investigation?

3           A     Could.

4           Q     Or the 2016 election interference --

5           A     Could.

6           Q     -- investigation?

7           A     Could.

8           Q     So would you say that, at the end of the day, that  
9       President Trump got the investigations that he was pressuring  
10      Ukraine for?

11          A     Hasn't gotten them yet, and, of course, President  
12      Zelensky didn't have to go in front of a mike and say this.  
13      But Mr. -- but the prosecutor general did say that he was  
14      going to take a look at any or all of these cases that may  
15      have been closed for no good reasons.

16          Q     All right. So he's at least open to looking into  
17      this?

18          A     He's at least open, yes.

19          Q     Okay. I think -- all right. We are out of time  
20      anyway. So we'll yield to the minority.

21          MR. JORDAN: Thank you, Ambassador.

22          I want to go back to the phone calls you had with  
23      Mr. Morrison. In the last hour, when I asked you, you said  
24      that there were several -- just a few minutes ago when  
25      majority counsel asked you, you said that many of those calls

1       dealt with the issue of China and its influence or attempt to  
2       influence Ukrainian -- the country of Ukraine.

3           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

4           MR. JORDAN: That's all fair?

5           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

6           MR. JORDAN: But there were at least four calls where it  
7       wasn't about China because you reference four calls in your  
8       testimony?

9           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Absolutely.

10          MR. JORDAN: Were there other calls that weren't about  
11       China that were about this subject that aren't reflected in  
12       your testimony?

13          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, I don't think so. I  
14       tried, as I went through my notes, to pull out everything  
15       that I could on this topic. I think I got them all, but I --  
16       I think I got them all.

17          MR. JORDAN: So you think any conversation you had with  
18       Mr. Morrison relative to the subject that we've been  
19       discussing all day are at least highlighted and referenced in  
20       your opening statement?

21          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, that was my intent --

22          MR. JORDAN: That was your intent.

23          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: -- and I hope I succeeded. Others  
24       have taken a look through these, and I think I'm okay on  
25       that.

1                   MR. JORDAN: And it's not out of the -- well, let me ask  
2                   it this way. Let's go to the first -- the first call is a  
3                   couple days, 3 days after the call between President Trump  
4                   and President Zelensky, and you get a readout from  
5                   Mr. Morrison about President Trump and President Zelensky's  
6                   call. Is that accurate? It's on page nine of your testimony  
7                   at the top.

8                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Page nine, let's see.

9                   MR. JORDAN: Top of page nine.

10                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: All right. Yes.

11                  MR. JORDAN: That's your first readout of the call  
12                  between President Trump and President Zelensky?

13                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

14                  MR. JORDAN: Okay. And why did Mr. Morrison call you?  
15                  Did he call you to give you a readout of that call, or was  
16                  there -- and/or some other reason?

17                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That will be in my notes. So what I  
18                  did, Congressman, in preparation for this, I tried to pull  
19                  out all relevant phone calls, meetings, et cetera, and within  
20                  each of those phone calls, I wrote down the components of  
21                  those or aspects of those that was relevant here, which means  
22                  that I didn't write down, and so I'm not remembering what  
23                  other topics. I know that there were other topics in many of  
24                  these calls.

25                  MR. JORDAN: Okay. You don't know about this one?

1                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't --

2                   MR. JORDAN: You know this was talked about, what you  
3                   referenced in your testimony, that he gave you a readout of  
4                   President Trump, President Zelensky's call.

5                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I do.

6                   MR. JORDAN: And there may have been something else on  
7                   the call. You don't recall?

8                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: There could have been other things  
9                   on the call as well, yes.

10                  MR. JORDAN: Who initiated this call?

11                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: You asked me this before, and I  
12                  probably told you that I couldn't remember. It's not clear  
13                  to me from my notes here whether or not I did it or he did  
14                  it. Again, I --

15                  MR. JORDAN: Can you hazard a guess who likely initiated  
16                  the call? Was it you calling him, or did he call you to talk  
17                  about this? And was this his primary focus of the call,  
18                  giving you a readout of President Trump, President Zelensky's  
19                  call?

20                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I can't hazard a guess.

21                  MR. JORDAN: Okay.

22                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Probably other issues on the call.  
23                  Again, his main focus was not this; it was China.

24                  MR. JORDAN: Okay.

25                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: But I don't want to guess.

1                   MR. JORDAN: Okay. Let's go to the next page.

2                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

3                   MR. JORDAN: Your second call with Mr. Morrison, it  
4                   looks like the big paragraph about halfway down, on  
5                   September 1st.

6                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yep.

7                   MR. JORDAN: And can you give me the particulars of this  
8                   call? Did he call you? Did you call him? Was it a  
9                   scheduled call?

10                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Ah, so this was -- so he was in  
11                  Warsaw on September 1st, yeah.

12                  MR. JORDAN: You indicate at the bottom of the paragraph  
13                  that he gives you a readout of the call that took place  
14                  between President Zelensky and Vice President Pence. Is that  
15                  accurate?

16                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes. Yes. Yes.

17                  MR. JORDAN: All right. And, again, how did this call  
18                  come about?

19                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Same way the others did, which is  
20                  one of the two of us emails on an unclass system the interest  
21                  in having a phone call. The other writes back and says: The  
22                  time is good. Let's go it at such and such a time.

23                  I go to a secure phone and get on it. So I can't hazard  
24                  a guess on who initiated this one either, Congressman.

25                  MR. JORDAN: Okay. And was it the primary focus to give

1       you a readout of the call between the President of Ukraine  
2       and the Vice President of the United States?

3           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

4           MR. JORDAN: Okay. So now we have two calls that you  
5       get from Mr. Morrison, you initiate, he initiates. It's on  
6       the thing. Some of them are on the weekend. And both are  
7       readouts from Mr. Morrison giving you a readout between  
8       either the President's call with the President of Ukraine or  
9       the Vice President's call with the President of Ukraine?

10          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

11          MR. JORDAN: Right. And then we have the third one,  
12       that we discussed earlier, which I think took place on the  
13       7th. Is that right? Page twelve of your testimony.

14          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Conversation with Mr. Morrison in  
15       which he describes -- yes.

16          MR. JORDAN: So now we have Mr. Morrison and you getting  
17       on the phone again, and Mr. Morrison is giving you a readout  
18       of a conversation that Ambassador Sondland had with President  
19       Trump?

20          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

21          MR. JORDAN: And is this -- I guess, maybe it is. I  
22       don't know. Is it customary for the NSC to call up the  
23       Ambassador and give them readouts of the President and Vice  
24       President's phone calls?

25          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It's not unusual for the NSC to be

1       describing the policy steps that need to be implemented  
2       coming out of phone calls. That's not unusual.

3            MR. JORDAN: That's not what I asked. I asked --

4            AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Sorry.

5            MR. JORDAN: -- is it unusual for the new guy at the NSC  
6        to call you three times in 5 weeks and give you a readout of  
7        the Vice President's call with President Zelensky, the  
8        President's call with President Zelensky, and the President's  
9        call with Ambassador Sondland? I'm asking, is that unusual?

10          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, I'm trying to be  
11        responsive here. It doesn't seem unusual to me.

12          MR. JORDAN: Okay. Yeah. I mean, I read this, and it's  
13        like Mr. Morrison, new on the job, and he calls you four  
14        times relative to the subject matter that this committee is  
15        looking into.

16          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yeah.

17          MR. JORDAN: And three of those four times is to give  
18        you a direct readout of the Vice President's conversation  
19        with someone else or the President, on two occasions the  
20        President of the United States talking with someone else.  
21        And you're saying that happens all the time?

22          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Those meetings don't happen all the  
23        time, as we know. So it doesn't happen all the time.

24          MR. JORDAN: Is it customary for the person at the NSC  
25        to, when the President of the United States has a

1 conversation with someone and the Vice President of the  
2 United States has a conversation with someone, is it  
3 customary for someone at the NSC to call up the Ambassador  
4 and say, "Hey, I just want to let you know what the President  
5 said on his call"?

6 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, my understanding is not  
7 unusual.

8 MR. JORDAN: Not unusual?

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Not unusual.

10 MR. JORDAN: And the fact that you had three of those in  
11 this sort of time period, that's not unusual?

12 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The unusual aspect of that is that  
13 there were meetings of the President of the United States  
14 with someone having to do with Ukraine in that short period  
15 of time.

16 MR. JORDAN: Okay. All right.

17 MR. ZELDIN: And, by the way, Ambassador, just to follow  
18 up with one quick question on that, when did you first meet  
19 Mr. Morrison?

20 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: In person, I met him when he came  
21 with Ambassador Bolton to Ukraine the end of August. That's  
22 when I first met him in person.

23 MR. ZELDIN: And so these phone calls from Tim Morrison  
24 to you, you hadn't even met Tim Morrison before?

25 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's correct.

1                   MR. ZELDIN: An Ambassador can be recalled by the  
2 President at any time with or without cause, correct?

3                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm sure that's -- yes.

4                   MR. ZELDIN: A lot of claims in your opening statement  
5 are without firsthand knowledge, and I just -- I wanted to  
6 ask about one of them. So, in your opening statement, you  
7 reference Burisma five times. You reference Biden twice.  
8 One of those references of Biden was just a reference to the  
9 July 25th call. The other reference was on page 12 of  
10 paragraph 3. And so, on September 7th, Ambassador Sondland  
11 has a call with the President, according to a conversation  
12 that you had with Tim Morrison, right?

13                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: September 7th. Are we looking at  
14 the same paragraph?

15                  MR. ZELDIN: Third paragraph down on page 12.

16                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Right, in which he described a phone  
17 conversation with Sondland and President Trump, yes, sir.

18                  MR. ZELDIN: This is the only reference in your opening  
19 statement to Biden other than your one reference to the  
20 July 25th call. And this isn't firsthand. It's not  
21 secondhand. It's not thirdhand. But if I understand this  
22 correctly, you're telling us that Tim Morrison told you that  
23 Ambassador Sondland told him that the President told  
24 Ambassador Sondland that Zelensky would have to open an  
25 investigation into Biden?

1                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's correct.

2                   MR. ZELDIN: Is it possible that somewhere in that chain  
3 of events that the President spoke to President Zelensky  
4 about Burisma? Probably assume President Trump spoke to  
5 Ambassador Sondland about Burisma?

6                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't know, Congressman.

7                   MR. ZELDIN: Yeah. It's just -- it's hard when we -- I  
8 mean, it's one thing if you have firsthand information, but a  
9 lot of what you're saying in your opening statement is not  
10 firsthand information. That's one example. And it happens  
11 to be the only reference at all in your opening statement to  
12 Joe Biden.

13                  You testified that the goal requesting investigations  
14 into the 2016 election in Burisma was to influence the U.S.  
15 election. Is that correct?

16                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm sorry. Say that again,  
17 Congressman.

18                  MR. ZELDIN: I believe you testified earlier that the  
19 goal of requesting investigations into the 2016 election and  
20 Burisma was to influence the U.S. election. Is that an  
21 accurate reflection of your testimony from earlier?

22                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't think so.

23                  MR. ZELDIN: Would you like to tell us what your  
24 position is on it? What was the goal of requesting  
25 investigations into 2016 election and Burisma?

1                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: As I understand it from one of  
2 the -- maybe the article in The New York Times about  
3 Mr. Giuliani's interest in Burisma, in that article, he  
4 describes, and I think he quotes Giuliani at some length,  
5 that article indicates that Giuliani was interested in  
6 getting some information on Vice President Biden that would  
7 be useful to Mr. Giuliani's client. I think that's what he  
8 says. He says he's got one client, and he's useful to the  
9 client.

10                  MR. ZELDIN: And then it's your inference that  
11 Mr. Giuliani's goal would be the President's goal?

12                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

13                  MR. ZELDIN: And your source is The New York Times?

14                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

15                  MR. ZELDIN: So do you have any other source that the  
16 President's goal in making this request was anything other  
17 than The New York Times?

18                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I have not talked to the President.  
19 I have no other information from what the President was  
20 thinking.

21                  MR. ZELDIN: Is it possible that requesting an  
22 investigation, for example, into the 2016 election wasn't to  
23 influence a future election?

24                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm sorry. Can you say that one  
25 again?

1                   MR. ZELDIN: Is it possible that the request to  
2 investigate interference with the 2016 election was not to  
3 influence a future election?

4                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't know, Congressman.

5                   MR. ZELDIN: Well, you just told us what you inferred  
6 based off of what The New York Times told you Rudy Giuliani  
7 was thinking, which inferred what the President was thinking.  
8 I'm asking you to answer a question that, is it possible that  
9 the request to investigate the 2016 election was for a reason  
10 other than influencing the 2020 election? Is that possible?

11                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't know if it's possible.

12                  MR. ZELDIN: I remember you testified a little earlier  
13 that you're familiar with the Robert Mueller investigation.

14                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I said I'd heard of the Robert  
15 Mueller investigation, yes, sir.

16                  MR. ZELDIN: And the investigation was still ongoing at  
17 that time, correct?

18                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I suppose -- yes.

19                  MR. ZELDIN: Was your understanding of the Robert  
20 Mueller investigation that Robert Mueller was investigating  
21 foreign interference in the U.S. election --

22                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

23                  MR. ZELDIN: -- from 2016?

24                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

25                  MR. ZELDIN: As far as Burisma and Zlochevsky, when did

1       you first become familiar with this corruption case?

2           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: With Burisma, I think this summer  
3       when it became -- when it was an item in the press.

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1 [6:30 p.m.]

2 MR. ZELDIN: And can you give us a rough idea of when  
3 that might have been?

4 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I can't.

5 MR. ZELDIN: A month?

6 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: July.

7 MR. ZELDIN: And you wrote in your opening -- you  
8 testified in your opening statement, it's on page 6,  
9 paragraph 2, quote: By mid-July it was becoming clear to me  
10 that the meeting President Zelensky wanted was conditioned on  
11 the investigations of Burisma and alleged Ukrainian  
12 interference in the 2016 elections.

13 So that was mid-July. Is it -- had you back familiar  
14 with this case before mid-July?

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: As I say, I don't remember exactly  
16 when I became familiar with that case.

17 MR. ZELDIN: I'm having trouble understanding how you  
18 would have concluded it was clear to you by mid-July that the  
19 meeting President Zelensky wanted conditioned on the  
20 investigations of Burisma if you can't even testify now that  
21 you had even heard of the Burisma case by then.

22 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I think I said it was sometime this  
23 summer. And I don't know exactly when it was.

24 MR. ZELDIN: So it's possible that you did hear Burisma  
25 before mid-July?

1                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

2                   MR. ZELDIN: And then in mid-July it, as you testified,  
3                   became clear to you that the meeting that President Zelensky  
4                   wanted was conditioned on an investigation into Burisma and  
5                   alleged Ukrainian interference in the 2016 U.S. elections.  
6                   Obviously you would be identifying at that point that it's  
7                   important to the President, that investigation, if you were  
8                   reaching that conclusion?

9                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No. What I know is what -- what  
10                  Ambassador Sondland was able to tell me about those  
11                  investigations and Ambassador Volker. I don't know what was  
12                  in the President's mind.

13                  MR. ZELDIN: So where was this condition coming from if  
14                  you're not sure if it was coming from the President?

15                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I think it was coming from Mr.  
16                  Giuliani.

17                  MR. ZELDIN: But not from the President?

18                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't know.

19                  MR. ZELDIN: And you testified earlier that Mr. -- you  
20                  were interpreting Rudy Giuliani's advocacy as the position of  
21                  the President?

22                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: What I said -- what I said, I think,  
23                  was the President was Giuliani's client.

24                  MR. ZELDIN: And by Rudy Giuliani -- you believe in  
25                  mid-July, when you reached this conclusion, that Rudy

1       Giuliani wants an investigation into Burisma. Are you  
2       believing at all that the President wants an investigation  
3       into Burisma or no?

4           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't know. What I know is that  
5       the direction was coming from Giuliani.

6           MR. ZELDIN: Okay. Well, it's important to point out  
7       then, because your opening statement has leaked because  
8       that's what's been happening during these depositions, so  
9       everyone outside has read your opening statement, but what  
10       they haven't read obviously is that you're testifying now  
11       that you're not even sure if that condition came from the  
12       President. You don't even know where it came from. You're  
13       guessing maybe Rudy Giuliani and you're not sure whether or  
14       not it came from the President. Is that what you're saying?

15           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: What I'm saying is that I'm  
16       describing conversations that I heard. I didn't hear it from  
17       the President. I can't say what the President was thinking.  
18       I can -- I can say what Kurt Volker and Ambassador Sondland  
19       told me.

20           MR. ZELDIN: Did you have any firsthand knowledge that  
21       confirms that the President was conditioning an investigation  
22       into Burisma and alleged election -- Ukrainian interference  
23       in the 2016 elections with a meeting with President Zelensky?

24           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Again, I had no conversations with  
25       the President.

1           MR. ZELDIN: So did you have any firsthand knowledge at  
2       all to support that?

3           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Firsthand meaning -- firsthand  
4       meaning had I talked to the President? No, I've never talked  
5       to the President.

6           MR. ZELDIN: Or any other firsthand knowledge, other  
7       than a communication directly with the President.

8           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No communication with the President.

9           MR. ZELDIN: And no communication with Rudy Giuliani.

10          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: There was none with Giuliani, only  
11       with Sondland and Volker.

12          MR. ZELDIN: Why wouldn't you want to get more familiar  
13       with the case on its merits at this time?

14          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm sorry, Congressman, say it  
15       again.

16          MR. ZELDIN: Why wouldn't you want to get more familiar  
17       with the case on its merits at that time?

18          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I am trying to do U.S. foreign  
19       policy. I am trying to stay out of U.S. domestic policy and  
20       politics. So I'm not looking to get involved in that.

21          MR. ZELDIN: Did the merits of the case matter to you --  
22       did the merits of the case matter to you in taking that  
23       position?

24          AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The merits of the case matter by  
25       taking the position of staying out of domestic politics.

1                   MR. ZELDIN: But the merits of whether or not there was  
2                   actual corruption was not part of your decisionmaking process  
3                   at that time?

4                   As part of your decision -- in mid-July you make this  
5                   conclusion of a condition. And I'm just asking if part of  
6                   that decisionmaking process of what to do next included any  
7                   analysis of this particular corruption case on its merits.

8                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I did not investigate the Burisma  
9                   case on its merits.

10                  MR. ZELDIN: Were there any meetings at that time at the  
11                  embassy to discuss the case on its merits?

12                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: What we did at the embassy, as I  
13                  mentioned, is we are focused on institutions, not on specific  
14                  cases. We're looking to fight back against corruption and to  
15                  help the Ukrainians fight back against corruption by  
16                  improving their courts and their judicial system. That's --  
17                  not on individual cases.

18                  MR. ZELDIN: And if you did take the time to analyze the  
19                  case on its merits and you were to determine that it, in  
20                  fact, had merit, that this was a corruption case impacting  
21                  parties from both the Ukraine and the United States, wouldn't  
22                  you possibly conclude differently with regard to an answer  
23                  you gave earlier where you said this was not in the U.S.  
24                  interest?

25                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Can't answer that one. Don't know.

1                   MR. ZELDIN: If the case had merits, maybe it would be  
2                   in the U.S. interest.

3                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Don't know, Congressman.

4                   MR. ZELDIN: And I believe you might have testified  
5                   earlier, U.S. law conditions aid to Ukraine based off of  
6                   their efforts to make progress in fighting corruption,  
7                   correct?

8                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Some of the security assistance has  
9                   conditions in the Defense Authorization Act every year that  
10                  has conditions on their -- having to do with civilian control  
11                  of the military and those kinds of things. And it may well  
12                  have some language about governance in contracting.

13                  MR. ZELDIN: If the President believed that looking  
14                  further into Ukrainian interference in the 2016 election and  
15                  Burisma had merit where would he have gone if you aren't  
16                  going to even look into it? What other way does he have to  
17                  look into these two cases?

18                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: He has -- he has a lot of resources,  
19                  Congressman, as you know. In the Justice Department I think  
20                  he's suggested or directed further investigations of 2016 and  
21                  related things. So he's got many ways to investigate.

22                  MR. ZELDIN: But you weren't one of those resources?

23                  AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's correct.

24                  MR. ZELDIN: So before you send your text on September  
25                  1st, it appears that there were two things that you come in

1 contact with, one being the Politico story that we spoke  
2 about earlier and on page 10 a September 1st conversation  
3 between Ambassador Sondland and Mr. Yermak in Warsaw.

4 With regards to that September 1st reference in your  
5 opening statement, the source of your information is Tim  
6 Morrison, correct?

7 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm looking for your cite here.

8 MR. ZELDIN: The bottom of page 10.

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The bottom of page 10, right.

10 During the same phone call I had with Mr. Morrison, he  
11 went on to describe a conversation Ambassador Sondland with  
12 Yermak.

13 Yes, it was with Morrison.

14 MR. ZELDIN: Tim Morrison. Is he your only source of  
15 information?

16 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

17 MR. ZELDIN: Was he in that meeting? Was he part of  
18 that conversation with -- between Ambassador Sondland and  
19 Mr. Yermak?

20 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't know.

21 MR. ZELDIN: Well, how would Mr. Morrison know that  
22 information if he wasn't in the meeting?

23 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Because he could have talked to  
24 Ambassador Sondland. I don't know which of those two.

25 MR. ZELDIN: Okay. So that conclusion, again, it's not

1           firsthand or secondhand?

2           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It could have been firsthand. I  
3           don't know. First or second --

4           MR. ZELDIN: But it's not your firsthand. So best case  
5           scenario it's your secondhand information, but maybe it's  
6           thirdhand information.

7           On your call with Tim Morrison after the July 25th call  
8           between President Trump and President Zelensky, did he tell  
9           you anything in his readout other than the reference to --  
10           anything else specifically from the call other than the  
11           reference to fire Lutsenko?

12           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes. He mentioned -- I think it was  
13           he who mentioned -- that there had been discussion of the  
14           previous ambassador.

15           Did I mention that? I think I did. Let's see here.

16           Yes, here we are. Yes, he said, fire Lutsenko. Talked  
17           about the previous ambassador. He mentioned Giuliani. And  
18           he mentioned -- and he mentioned that Gordon had -- Gordon  
19           Sondland had called the President before and after the  
20           meeting -- the phone call.

21           MR. ZELDIN: But as far as what was on the July 25th  
22           phone call, other than a reference to fire Lutsenko, what  
23           else was specifically said on the call?

24           AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Again, I just said that he also  
25           talked about the previous ambassador, Ambassador Yovanovitch.

1       He mentioned Giuliani. And that's all I have written down.

2            MR. ZELDIN: After the text on September 1st, you then  
3       had a conversation with Ambassador Sondland, correct?

4            AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: September 1st, you're going to go  
5       back to that one.

6            MR. ZELDIN: Yes, we're going back to that.

7            AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Hang on here. So -- this is when --  
8       are you looking at page 13, Congressman?

9            MR. ZELDIN: Well, you do talk about it on page 10. At  
10       the bottom is the reference to Ambassador Sondland's meeting  
11       with Yermak that you heard from Tim Morrison. And then it  
12       goes through, as you go into the next page, the following  
13       paragraphs are leading you into your conversation that you  
14       had with Ambassador Sondland. The first full paragraph on  
15       page 11 is your text, and then you get into specifics about  
16       the phone call in the following paragraph.

17            In that conversation between you and Ambassador  
18       Sondland, did you ask him about the meeting he had with  
19       Mr. Yermak that Tim Morrison told you about?

20            AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I did not.

21            MR. ZELDIN: So the basis of your information,  
22       secondhand or thirdhand, that there was a link between money  
23       and an investigation into Burisma, you then have an  
24       opportunity to talk to the person who was in the meeting and  
25       you don't even ask him whether or not that meeting happened

1 or if this was discussed?

2 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I was -- there's no doubt that the  
3 meeting happened. And I didn't ask him further about the  
4 conversation with Yermak.

5 And those are -- you know, all I'm reporting -- all I'm  
6 reporting is firsthand knowledge of my phone call with people  
7 or my texts with people.

8 MR. ZELDIN: Right.

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: But you're right, those are often  
10 about other conversations.

11 MR. ZELDIN: But it seemed like that would have been a  
12 good opportunity to ask Ambassador Sondland about the meeting  
13 with Mr. Yermak, correct?

14 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: And I didn't take the opportunity.

15 MR. ZELDIN: How long was that phone call, if you  
16 remember, between you and Ambassador Sondland on September  
17 1st?

18 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't remember.

19 MR. ZELDIN: Maybe -- any idea? Like a couple minutes  
20 or 30 minutes? Was it a short call, a long call?

21 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Let's see here. So we're talking  
22 about the phone call on 11, on page 11. Is that right?

23 MR. ZELDIN: On page 11.

24 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yeah, yeah. Right. Asked me to  
25 call him, which I did. During that phone call, right.

1                   Sondland told me he now recognized he made a mistake.

2                   So probably, I don't know, 15 minutes, 20 minutes.

3                   MR. ZELDIN: And here you have a -- so the reference on  
4                   the phone call is to Burisma, not the Bidens, is that -- is  
5                   that correct? That's what's -- that's what's in your opening  
6                   statement?

7                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: During the phone call Ambassador  
8                   Sondland told me that President Trump told him he wants  
9                   President Zelensky to state publicly investigate Burisma and  
10                   alleged --- is it that the one you're talking about?

11                   MR. ZELDIN: Yeah.

12                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: On the second paragraph?

13                   MR. ZELDIN: Yes.

14                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

15                   MR. ZELDIN: And nothing linking that to aid, correct?

16                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, the next paragraph describes how  
17                   it's linked to aid.

18                   MR. ZELDIN: Where -- where did -- where did -- where  
19                   did Ambassador Sondland --

20                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Link it to aid? So --

21                   MR. ZELDIN: Go ahead.

22                   AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yeah. So Ambassador Sondland on  
23                   this phone call tells me that he now recognizes that he'd  
24                   made a mistake when he told the Ukrainians that the only  
25                   thing they had to do in order to -- the only thing they had

1 to do -- only thing they would get if they -- if they  
2 announced these investigations was a meeting. Said that was  
3 a mistake.

4 MR. ZELDIN: That was never actually communicated to  
5 Ukraine; correct?

6 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, I think that is what he  
7 communicated to Yermak.

8 MR. ZELDIN: According to a conversation that you had  
9 with Tim Morrison about what Ambassador Sondland spoke to  
10 Mr. Yermak?

11 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's on the previous page, that's  
12 correct.

13 MR. ZELDIN: You had this conversation with Ambassador  
14 Sondland and you didn't ask him?

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Did you just ask that? Is that the  
16 same question? I just want to be sure I'm getting this.

17 Yeah, I did not ask him.

18 MR. ZELDIN: Go ahead.

19 VOICE: No, I'm just confused as to which call.

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1 [6:46 p.m.]

2 MR. ZELDIN: We are talking about the September 1st  
3 phone call. I believe the Ambassador is testifying that  
4 Ambassador Sondland had communicated this to Mr. Yermak. But  
5 that information is not from Ambassador Sondland; that  
6 information is from Tim Morrison, who may or may not have  
7 been in that meeting with Ambassador Sondland and Mr. Yermak.

8 And then when Ambassador Taylor then sent this text and  
9 had a call, during the call with Ambassador Sondland, he  
10 didn't even raise that meeting at all with Mr. Yermak.

11 I just want to understand --

12 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Got it. Got it. Right.

13 MR. ZELDIN: -- that chain. Is that all correct?

14 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I didn't raise the Yermak meeting.  
15 What I raised was the concern about linking the security  
16 assistance to the investigation. That was the concern.

17 MR. ZELDIN: Right, but you didn't confirm, though, that  
18 that was actually communicated. You didn't ask Ambassador  
19 Sondland that.

20 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: If he'd communicated it to the  
21 Ukrainians? No, I asked him about the linkage.

22 MR. ZELDIN: Right.

23 Okay, Steve.

24 BY MR. CASTOR:

25 Q Looking back on these events, would you have

1       handled anything differently in terms of your communications  
2       with the seventh floor of the State Department?

3            You sent your cable. You know, you had a couple phone  
4       calls with Mr. Brechbuhl. But it doesn't seem like your  
5       concerns penetrated.

6            A       Mr. Castor, I don't think that's true. I think  
7       that, first of all, they shared my concerns. Second of all,  
8       they got my cable. Third of all, based on the concerns and  
9       the cable, Secretary Pompeo went to the White House, probably  
10      on a couple of occasions, you know, in trying to have these  
11      meetings, and attempted to get the decision changed. So I'm  
12      comfortable --

13           Q       Okay.

14           A       -- that I got a response.

15           Q       Okay. So, looking back on things, you wouldn't  
16      have handled anything different?

17           A       Correct.

18           Q       Okay.

19           MR. CASTOR: I'd just note for the record we haven't  
20      seen a copy of the subpoena and we haven't made it a part of  
21      the record. Is that still on the table as an option?

22           MR. GOLDMAN: We're happy to show you a copy of the  
23      subpoena.

24           MR. BITAR: We're more than happy for you, Mr. Castor,  
25      to also make sure that the seal is authentic and that the

1       signature is authentic. No worries. I'll get it for you  
2       now.

3            MR. GOLDMAN: And apparently you have an email in your  
4       inbox with the --

5            MR. CASTOR: Oh, okay. Yeah, I mean, I don't have my  
6       email.

7                    BY MR. CASTOR:

8            Q       You would agree that, if Burisma -- if their  
9       motivation for engaging Hunter Biden for their board was not  
10      related to his corporate governance expertise but, in fact,  
11      was hoping to buy some protection, you would agree that  
12      that's worthy of investigating, right?

13           A       Mr. Castor, I don't know why Burisma got him on the  
14      board.

15           Q       But if Ukrainians were engaged in misdeeds or  
16      wrongdoing with regard to putting Hunter Biden on their  
17      board, that could be something that could be worth  
18      investigating, right?

19           A       I don't know. I don't know. I don't know the  
20      relationship that he had with the board. I don't know.

21           Q       Okay. And, at the time, the Vice President had a,  
22      you know, policy supervision of Ukraine on some respects.

23           A       He was very interested in policy with Ukraine, yes.

24           Q       Okay. So do you see a perceived conflict of  
25      interest there?

1           A    I'm a fact witness. I'm not giving opinions on --

2           Q    Okay.

3           A    -- this thing, but -- so I --

4           Q    Is it reasonable to see a perceived conflict of  
5    interest there, or is that crazy?

6           A    I've said other things are crazy.

7           Q    A reasonable person could conclude that there is a  
8    possible perceived conflict of interest there, right?

9           MR. BELLINGER: You asked him that question earlier, at  
10   the beginning, about 7-1/2 hours ago. It was one of the  
11   first questions you asked him. He's already answered it.

12          MR. CASTOR: So he's not going to answer it?

13          MR. BELLINGER: He's already answered it.

14           BY MR. CASTOR:

15          Q    Have you had any communications with other  
16   witnesses or likely witnesses before this investigation, such  
17   as Mr. Morrison? Presumably he's sort of on the docket next  
18   to come in. Have you had any conversations about your  
19   testimony with other possible witnesses?

20          A    Not about testimony. Again, he's very interested  
21   in China, and we continue to talk about China --

22          Q    Okay.

23          A    -- but nothing about --

24          Q    With Mr. Reeker?

25          A    No.

1 Q With some of the others?

2 A No.

3 Q You didn't have any communications with some of our  
4 previous witnesses?

5 A No. Nothing on the substance of the testimony.

6 Q And just one other item. The State Department,  
7 they didn't order you to not appear under subpoena, right?

8 A Correct.

9 MR. CASTOR: I think that's all I've got. I'm out of  
10 members, so -- I'm almost out of time.

11 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

12 Q Ambassador Taylor, you've been here a long time. I  
13 just wanted to address one thing --

14 A Please. Please.

15 Q -- which was brought up in the last --

16 A Yep.

17 Q It will just be a couple minutes. But we  
18 understand you're tired and it's been a long day, and we --

19 A No, no. I am tired, but it's okay.

20 Q We appreciate it. This won't be long.

21 A Not a problem.

22 Q So I think you testified earlier today that you  
23 drafted your statement based on, in part, a review of your  
24 notes and the various WhatsApp and text messages that you are  
25 in possession of, right?

1           A    Correct.

2           Q    And so is it accurate that the statement, the  
3       opening statement, that you gave is based on your very best  
4       recollection after reviewing your own notes?

5           A    It is correct.

6           Q    Okay. And so is that the most accurate recitation  
7       of events that you can remember today? Is --

8           A    It is.

9           Q    -- that right?

10          A    It is.

11          Q    When Mr. Zeldin was questioning you, he was talking  
12       about the connection -- he was sort of conflating a couple  
13       things between Mr. Giuliani, Mr. Trump, and the New York  
14       Times article. I just want to clarify a couple of things for  
15       now.

16          You did see that May 9th New York Times article, which I  
17       believe is exhibit 1, right?

18          A    I did.

19          Q    And so you understood from that article that  
20       Mr. Giuliani was interested in pressing Ukraine to conduct  
21       investigations into Biden and the 2016 election?

22          A    Correct.

23          Q    And that was before you took the job.

24          A    It was.

25          Q    Okay.

1           A    It was one of the hesitations about taking the job.

2           Q    Right. I believe you expressed in your text  
3        messages your concerns about Rudy Giuliani and Biden in those  
4        text messages. Do you recall that?

5           A    I do.

6           Q    And were you aware of other public statements,  
7        either on Twitter or on television, that Rudy Giuliani was  
8        making frequently on this topic, about these investigations?

9           A    Not on Twitter or television, because I rarely do  
10       either of those. But in the general press, I think this is  
11       pretty well-described.

12          Q    Okay.

13          And then you also testified, right, that at that  
14       May 23rd Oval Office meeting you understood that President  
15       Trump directed Ambassadors Sondland, Volker, and Secretary  
16       Perry to consult with Rudy Giuliani in order for a White  
17       House meeting to occur?

18          A    That was my understanding.

19          Q    That was your understanding.

20          A    Yes.

21          Q    And then after that point, you had many  
22       conversations with Ambassadors Sondland and Volker about Rudy  
23       Giuliani's interest in the investigations in Ukraine. Is  
24       that accurate?

25          A    Mr. Goldman, I don't remember many conversations

1       with those two about Rudy Giuliani's specific interest, but  
2       certainly with the interest that they were expressing,  
3       presumably coming from Giuliani, in having these  
4       investigations proceed.

5           Q     Right. And you say presumably coming from Rudy  
6       Giuliani because you, A, understood that Rudy Giuliani was  
7       interested in these investigations and, B, understood that  
8       the President had directed them to discuss Rudy Giuliani's  
9       concerns before scheduling a White House meeting.

10          A     A and B both correct.

11          Q     Okay.

12           And then you had a telephone call with Tim Morrison on  
13       July 28th where he gave you a brief readout of the  
14       President's call with President Zelensky.

15          A     Yes.

16          Q     And I believe you testified that you understood  
17       also that Ambassador Sondland spoke to President Trump both  
18       before and after that call?

19          A     Tim Morrison said that, that he had -- in that  
20       call. He said -- yes.

21          Q     Okay. And then when you actually read the call  
22       transcript, Tim Morrison's readout was accurate, correct?

23          A     It was.

24          Q     It wasn't complete --

25          A     It wasn't complete, but what he said was accurate.

1       Right. Yes.

2           Q    And, subsequently then, you in early September had  
3       two separate phone calls, right, with Tim Morrison and  
4       Ambassador Sondland about a phone call between Ambassador  
5       Sondland and President Trump?

6           A    Correct. And both --

7           Q    Right?

8           A    Yes.

9           Q    And both of those conversations, so what Ambassador  
10      Sondland told you about his own conversation with President  
11      Trump and what Tim Morrison told you about Ambassador  
12      Sondland's conversation with President Trump, were pretty  
13      consistent.

14       A    They were pretty consistent.

15       Q    Right. And you understood that President Trump was  
16      insisting and conditioning the White House meeting on, I  
17      think, quote, "everything," which was both the security  
18      assistance and the White House meeting.

19       A    That's what Ambassador Sondland said. He said that  
20      they were linked. They were linked.

21       Q    Right.

22       A    I don't remember him saying President Trump said  
23      that they had to be linked.

24       Q    Right. But you understood Ambassador Sondland was  
25      speaking regularly --

1           A     Having just gotten off the phone call with  
2     President Trump, and he was then relaying it to Yermak  
3     and me.

4           Q     Right.

5           And then you also had your own conversations with  
6     Ukrainian officials about Rudy Giuliani, right? And if I  
7     could refresh you, because it's late, you, I think, testified  
8     that on July 10th, when you had your meeting with the Chief  
9     of Staff and the Defense Minister, they relayed to you that  
10    they understood that Mr. Giuliani had said that there would  
11    not be a phone call.

12          A     Ah. Yes. Yeah, that's exactly right. And that  
13    came through the Prosecutor General Lutsenko. Yes.

14          Q     Right. And they certainly understood that  
15    Mr. Giuliani represented President Trump, correct?

16          A     They did.

17          Q     Because why else would they care what Rudy Giuliani  
18    thought?

19          A     Correct.

20          Q     And just to be clear, who ultimately decides  
21    whether or not there is a White House meeting between the  
22    President of the United States and any other foreign leader?  
23    Is it Rudy Giuliani, or is it the President of the United  
24    States?

25          A     It's the President of the United States.

1 Q Okay.

2 MR. GOLDMAN: Just 1 minute.

3 All right. I think we are done. I don't know if the  
4 minority has a couple followup questions?

5 MR. CASTOR: Thank you for coming in today. We  
6 appreciate your cooperation.

7 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Glad to be here.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: I can tell my timing is good.

9 MR. GOLDMAN: Chairman Schiff has arrived to adjourn the  
10 proceedings.

11 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Unless he has questions.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: No, no. We are adjourned. And I want to  
13 thank you, Ambassador.

14 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 [Whereupon, at 7:00 p.m., the deposition was concluded.]

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